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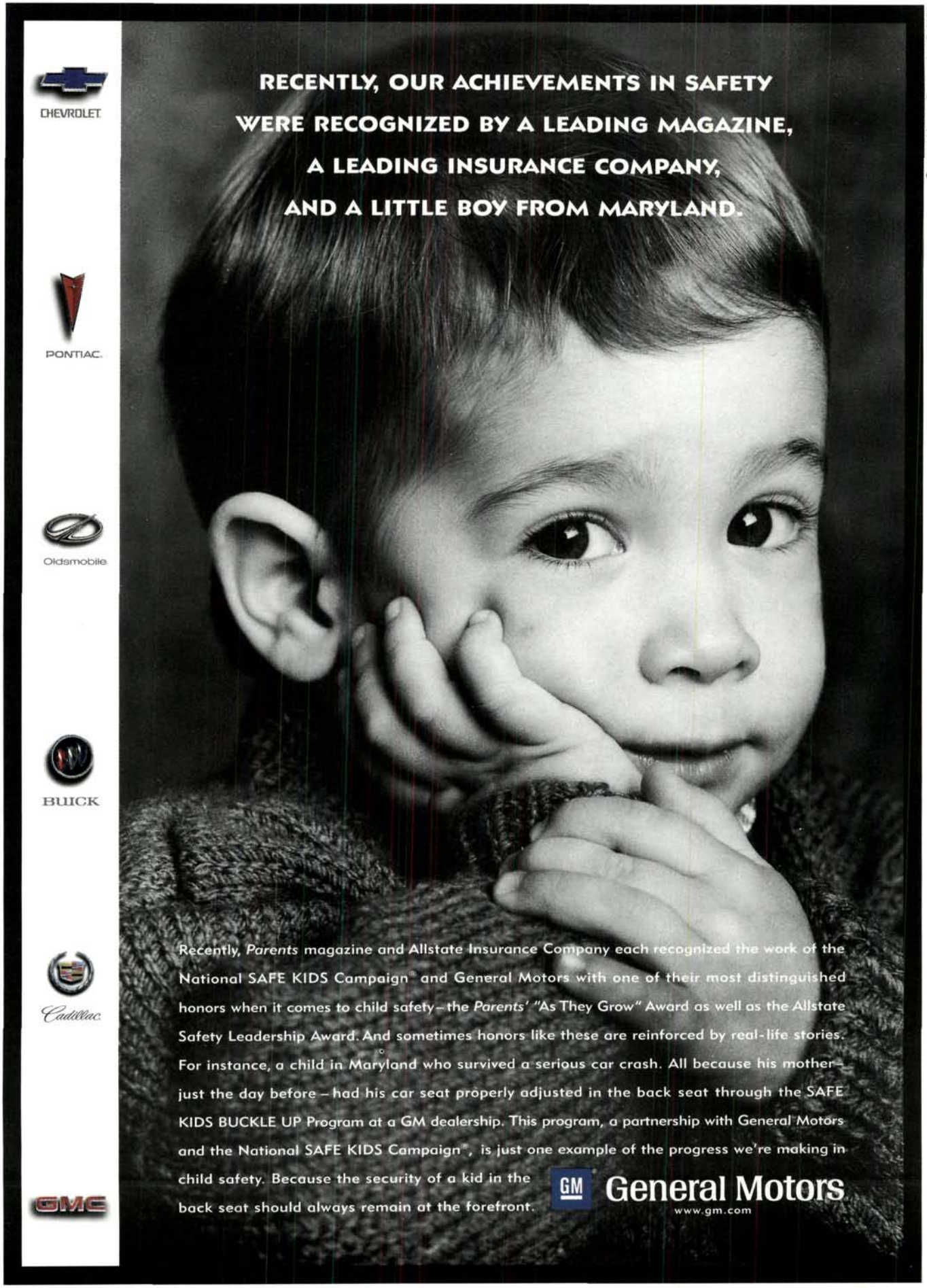
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NATIONAL REVIEW

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■ LETTERS ■

THE POWER OF THE FEW

Peter VanDoren is quite right in pointing out that powerful, if often narrow, interests are behind the seemingly endless flow of regulations emanating from Washington ("Strangulation by Regulation," May 1).

And yet for all the time, energy, and resources spent in drafting and enforcing federal regulations, the government lacks the analytical tools and empirical data to demonstrate whether the whole effort is worthwhile. This is particularly true in the areas of health, safety, and the environment, where the Office of Management and Budget recently acknowledged that "it is difficult, if not impossible, to estimate the actual costs and benefits of existing federal regulations with accuracy. We lack good information about complex interactions between the different regulations and the economy."

This admission came from the Clinton administration's OMB. All the more reason not to stand idly by and allow Leviathan to continue to grow and prosper.

Bonner R. Cohen
Arlington, Va.

ARGUING *THE SIMPSONS*

Jonah Goldberg's article on *The Simpsons* hits the mark ("Homer Never Nods," May 1). I am an evangelical pastor who has 205 episodes on tape. I use examples from the show all the time with my parishioners and friends, pointing out the Biblical, moral, and cultural references that we can all learn from. As Mr. Goldberg implies, *The Simpsons* touches on almost every facet of American life and can be used as a medium for us to better understand ourselves.

Ryan Rupe
Pearland, Tex.

I have a bone to pick with Jonah Goldberg. Considering that *Simpsons* creator and primary writer Matt Groening is a Portland local and his political leanings are far more obvious to Portlanders (best evidenced by his *Life in Hell* strip) than to an East Coaster who may have seen only *The Simpsons*, I think the article is a bit off base. If anything, it may suggest a better way to watch *The Simpsons*: not as most liberal elitists who think they know middle America do (the *American Beauty* syndrome), but rather as open-minded people who can clearly distinguish between the reality of middle America and the myths that surround it.

Steve Seitz
Portland, Ore.

IN A GRAND TRADITION

John Derbyshire, in "Still Useful, and Idiotic" (May 1), writes: "Wherever there is a jackboot stomping on a human face there will be a well-heeled Western liberal to explain that the face does, after all, enjoy free health care and 100 percent literacy."

Quite simply one of the best lines ever written in NATIONAL REVIEW. No small praise, that, especially considering that this is the publication that brought us O'Sullivan's Law and has printed William F. Buckley Jr. for almost half a century.

Jason Fetchik
Duarte, Calif.

A MEDIA OASIS

I want to express my profound gratitude for the excellent articles that have appeared in your magazine concerning the Elián González case. As a Cuban American, I have found in NATIONAL REVIEW a refuge of wisdom and true patriotism from a biased media which for the most part has not only distorted the truth about Elián, but demonized Cuban Americans.

It is one of the most ironic aspects of the Elián case that the community of Cuban Americans in Miami, which has had a very clear record of patriotism, has been accused of anti-Americanism by many who in the past have criticized as naïve its defense of this great nation. What many Castro-friendly liberals, such as New York congressman Jose Serrano, cannot tolerate about us is that the socio-economic success of Cuban Americans constitutes the failure of the Left's political agenda. With their allies in the media, they are trying to convince the public that the Cuban-American community is the obstacle preventing normal relations with Castro's Stalinist regime. After all, most of them minimize the difference between Castro's murderous oppression and the U.S. as a matter of different, legitimate political systems.

Antonio Lopez-Villalta
Boynton Beach, Fla.

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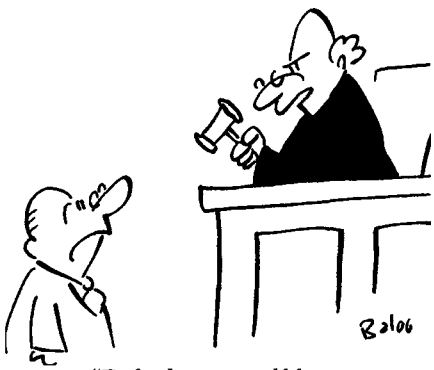
■ FOR THE RECORD ■

■ President **Clinton**, on whether life in White House is good for marriage: "I think it's been good for ours because I got to live above the store. . . . We've probably had more time together in our time here than at any point in our marriage. And I've enjoyed that immensely. It's been wonderful for us." . . . Clinton, on his dog **Buddy**: "He sleeps with me when Hillary's not here. He's my true friend. We have a great time." . . . May issue of *Playboy* features photo of Clinton and **Hugh Hefner**. . . . Clinton, on the presidency: "I'd do it forever if I could." . . . In Pew Research poll, Clinton's approval rating drops to 48 percent, lowest point since 1995. . . . Aboard Air Force One, Clinton says he'll live with mother-in-law in Little Rock condo while presidential library's living quarters are under construction. . . . Clinton: "I hope and expect that someday I'll vote for [Indiana senator] **Evan Bayh** for president of the United States." . . . Clinton accidentally calls **George W. Bush** "President Bush," then corrects mistake. . . . In court papers, Clinton says testimony in **Paula Jones** case was "not legally false." . . . In nationalreview.com interview, pollster **John Zogby** says "there is indeed a phenomenon of Clinton fatigue and it affects **Gore** probably more than it affects Clinton."

■ *The Hotline*'s polling scoreboard shows Bush leading in 23 states worth 271 electoral votes—one more than necessary to clinch White House—and Vice President Gore leading in 11 states worth 156 electoral votes. . . . Gore blasts "gaps in Governor Bush's foreign-policy views and experience." . . . Gore, eight years ago: "If you want to go back through the history of this century and before, there is a long list of governors who have been among the finest commanders in chief that this nation has had." . . . Heiress/terrorist **Patty Hearst** announces support for Gore, says **Elián González** raid "was one of the better hostage-takings," according to New York *Daily News*. . . . Gore, on use of marijuana for medical purposes, last December: "Where you have sufficient controls, I think that doctors ought to have that option." . . . Gore, on medical marijuana in May: "Right now, the science does not show me, or the experts whose judgment I trust, that it is the proper medication for pain and that there are not better alternatives available in every situation." . . . United Steelworkers of America president **George Becker**, on Gore lobbying for China trade deal: "We are not going to be forgiving on this." . . . Gore says *National Lampoon's Vacation* was "my favorite movie of all time."

■ Bush tells ABC's **Barbara Walters** why he started drinking alcohol as a young man: "There's nothing better than a cold beer and Mexican food, or a cold beer and barbecue." . . . Bush



"Defending yourself from a mugger, eh?—Are you trying to tell the police how to do their job?"

announces program to distribute free trigger locks in Texas. . . . **Alan Keyes** and **Lenora Fulani** ally to file suit against Federal Election Commission for shutting out independent parties from presidential debates. . . . **Craig Livingstone**, Democratic operative fired by White House for role in Filegate scandal, now drives limo in D.C. . . . Actress **Goldie Hawn** lobbies Congress against China trade bill. During press conference reporter asks her to name her representative. Silence. Rep. **Nancy Pelosi** (D., Calif.) feeds answer: Rep. **Henry Waxman** (D., Calif.).

■ Sen. **Daniel Patrick Moynihan** (D., N.Y.), on whether Democrats will support Social Security privatization: "No, we have a great capacity for missing opportunities." . . . Sen. **Patty Murray** (D., Wash.), on GOP education bill's tutoring provisions: "It is not directed by the school, it is directed by the parent. And I think that that is one of the underlying flaws and concerns that we have with this. . . . I do not know how a school district is going to manage this when . . . frankly, the parent is in control." . . . Service employees threaten to strike during Democratic convention in Los Angeles.

■ Nation of Islam leader **Louis Farrakhan**, who wrote that **Malcolm X** "is worthy of death" two months before 1965 assassination, tells *60 Minutes*: "I acknowledge that and regret that any word that I have said caused the loss of life of a human being." . . . United Methodist Church, largest U.S. pro-abortion denomination, votes to oppose partial-birth abortion. . . . San Francisco ponders banning cosmetic surgery for pets. . . . Philadelphia becomes largest public-school district to adopt uniforms.

■ Middle East and North Africa have world's lowest rate of H.I.V. infection, says CIA report, owing to conservative Arab culture. . . . Netherlands reports more than 2,200 cases of euthanasia in 1999. . . . Eritrea and Ethiopia resume fighting WWI-style border war. . . . Prestigious commission in Germany recommends that military rely more on professional soldiers, less on draft. . . . Canada's University of Alberta to offer "Reading Oprah" course, featuring Winfrey's famous reading list, plus her diet and exercise book as texts. . . . New U.K. government "21st-century parenting" curriculum teaches children to cope with divorce, separation, and "re-partnering," including single-parent families and homosexual partnerships. Guidelines stress the importance of "stable relationships" but say marriage is only one model.

■ Reporters show Gov. Bush copy of supermarket tabloid *Weekly World News*, featuring story that Bush has alien backers. Replies candidate, according to *New York Times*: "New faces, new voices . . . It goes to show I'm willing to reach across certain demographic lines." **NR**

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THE WEEK

■ The Park Service let a fire in New Mexico blaze out of control. Did Hillary find some more billing records?

■ John McCain endorsed, endorsed, endorsed George W. Bush. The press, which typically regards McCain as the sodium-Pentothal candidate—all truth, all the time—couldn't quite bring itself to believe it. McCain played along by making his support seem as grudging as possible, lest anyone add "gracious" to his current sobriquet, "loser."

■ When a vice president of the NRA said that the group would "work out of" Bush's office if he became president, Al Gore jumped all over the comment. "Maybe," Gore sneered, "he would pick Charlton Heston as the next surgeon general." Maybe he would pick him as *attorney* general, so that the laws on the books would be competently enforced and submachine guns would not be waved in the faces of six-year-olds. Meanwhile, a "million"—i.e., several thousand—women marched on Washington in support of gun control, to the hearty applause of the media. But guns are an issue on which, at election time, committed constitutionalists outnumber committed sentimentalists. The more they talk, the more Gore and the marchers bring out the vote for Bush.

■ Edgar Allan Poe wrote a story about a character who was sucked into the Norwegian Maelstrom, but managed to float out. Rudolph Giuliani is not looking so buoyant. His behavior—announcing a separation from his wife at a press conference, taking a public stroll with his girlfriend—suggests a man who did not want to run for Senate in the first place, using his marital and physical difficulties to bow out. At this writing, the two contenders for his slot are Long Island congressmen Rick Lazio and Peter King. Lazio has the lead, having announced his interest in the race months ago. King is the more desirable candidate in certain respects—he is pro-life, while Lazio opposes only partial-birth abortions. But objectively, anyone this side of Slobodan Milosevic would be preferable to Mrs. Clinton; and no one would mobilize the base of the Democratic party like Mayor Giuliani. It is a shame to concede this much to the enemies of the man who made New York City livable again, but that is life in the maelstrom.

■ The House Democrats filed a civil RICO suit against majority whip Tom DeLay. Seems DeLay has, among other things, been conspiring to harm the interests of Democrats—which, unless we are mistaken, is part of DeLay's job. The suit is really meant 1) simply to harass and 2) to launch a fishing expedition. Its pedigree traces to the junk anti-Clinton lawsuits filed by legal opportunists of the Right, who in turn borrowed their tactics from legal activists of the Left. No matter who files them, such suits represent a corruption of our legal system, and our politics.

■ The Navy resumed training exercises on the island of Vieques, off Puerto Rico, after federal agents cleared away protesters there in early May. The Navy has used the island since World War II; protests began when a civilian was killed by a stray shell in 1999. Normally in such disputes people call their congressman. But Puerto Rico has no voting congressman, since it is a "commonwealth" (in effect, a territory) of the United States. The Vieques situation has been exploited by the small Puerto Rican independence movement, and by showboating Puerto Rican politicians on the mainland. "I was born in the colony," said New York Democratic congressman Jose Serrano, "and now I'm a member of a Congress of a colonial power." If that status oppresses Mr. Serrano, he should resign (he wouldn't be missed). But he does describe the situation accurately. The United States has long fretted over the propriety of owning colonies. Most of our territories were soon filled with American migrants, and admitted to statehood. But Puerto Rico has its own people and culture, and should not become a state. So long as it was happy with its status, it could remain as an anomaly. But if Vieques indicates real, as opposed to manufactured, resentment, then the United States should consider moving Puerto Rico toward independence.

■ In an effort to head off a de facto national primary, a Republican commission led by former Tennessee senator Bill Brock has suggested revamping the way that the party chooses its presidential nominee. The plan calls for four multi-state primaries over the course of four months, with the smallest states going first and the largest last. Conservatives should welcome the proposal. Short primary seasons increase the importance of the media, money, and party establishment—none of which is likely to help conservatives. The commission's recommendation would lengthen the primary season, making possible insurgencies like Ronald Reagan's in 1976. The commission did not address the first-in-the-nation status of Iowa and New Hampshire, a thorny problem it will have to take up at the summer convention. But it's time those two states were treated like all the rest. Iowa's ludicrous straw poll serves no purpose except to raise money for the state party and to punish candidates who lack money, and New Hampshire has been responsible for the semi-success of ideologically aber-

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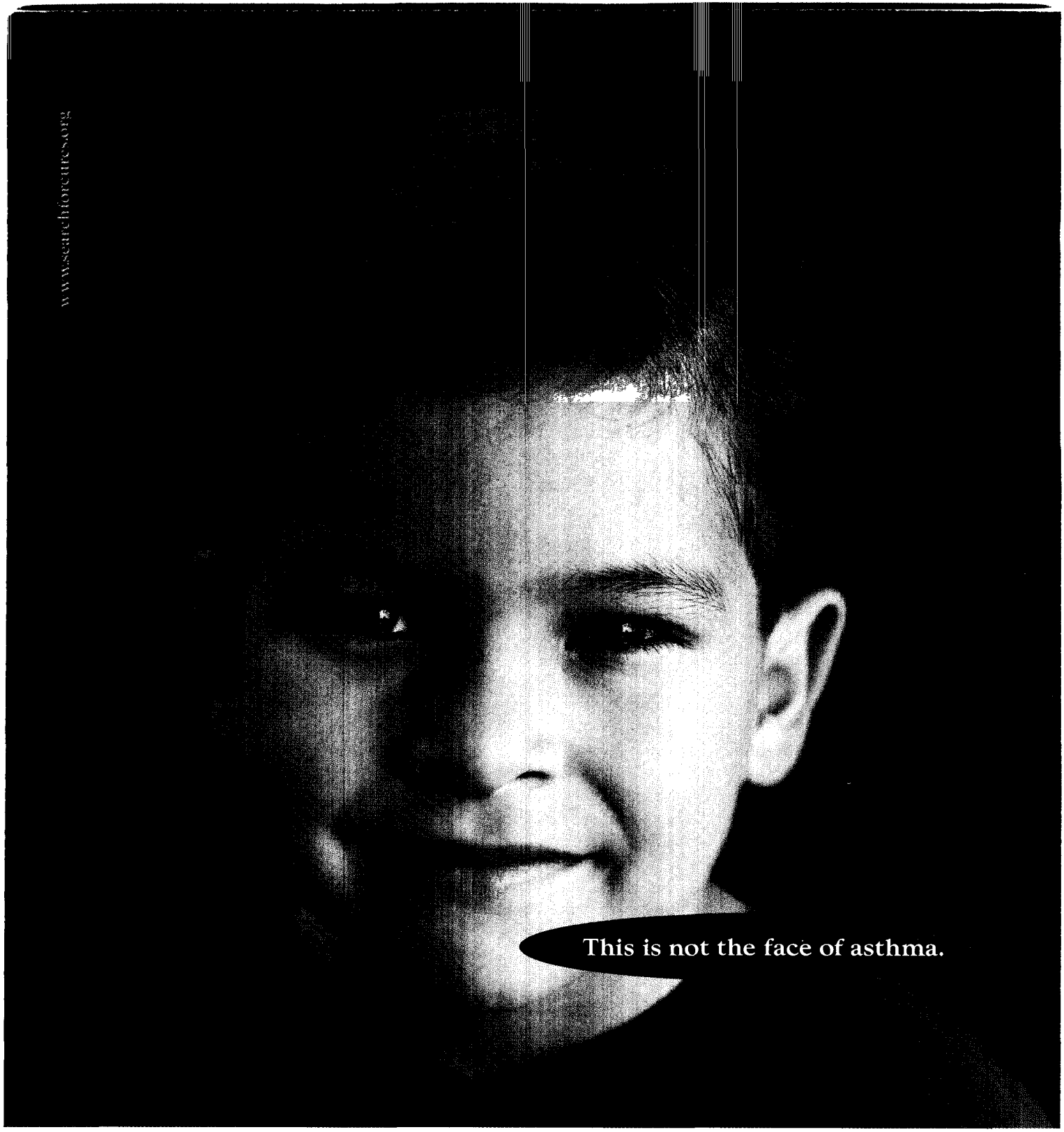

It's the face of Jeremy Gutierrez — skateboarder, bike rider, rollerblader, kid. It wasn't always that way. Like five million other children with asthma, Jeremy was forced to live an overly protected life due to fear of attacks. And when attacks did come, they often meant being rushed away from friends and family into the fear and trauma of the emergency room. Today, America's pharmaceutical companies are discovering medicines that help kids like Jeremy stay healthy, stay in school, and stay out of hospitals. Pharmaceutical company researchers are working hard to discover breakthroughs that will help make many illnesses and diseases a thing of the past and bring more patients new hope for a better tomorrow. Thanks to new medicines discovered by these researchers, today, Jeremy has a life like any normal six-year-old — a life full of curiosity, full of wonder and full of health.

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rant candidates such as Pat Buchanan and John McCain. As the Brock plan moves forward, we urge the GOP to be bold.

■ The three judges of the U.S. court of appeals in Atlanta who got the case for granting a political-asylum hearing to Elián González are so exquisitely balanced, they could fill the seats of *The McLaughlin Group*. Judge Edmondson is a Reagan appointee, said to be sympathetic to the Miami Gonzálezes; Judge Wilson is a Clinton appointee, thought to favor the government's case; Judge Dubina, appointed by President Bush, can't seem to make up his mind. In the 80-minute hearing on May 11, Judge Edmondson twice referred to Cuba as a "Communist, totalitarian state"—a point of view that must have been shocking to leftist attorney Gregory Craig and the representatives of the Justice Department. *Communist? Totalitarian?* One can imagine their pained expressions. Meanwhile, little Elián is a much-sought-after guest among the sorts of folk who, even now, are still not ashamed to be known as Friends of Bill. One such couple, Smith and Elizabeth Bagley, had Elián and his father to a soirée at their Georgetown mansion—a *much* nicer place than that dreadful, tacky Miami house, my dear. No plaster statues of the Blessed Virgin here! In case you think this was slimy even by Clinton standards, please be reassured: A spokesperson for the Bagleys insisted that this was not a fundraiser and that no money changed hands. It was, in other words, just plain, honest voyeurism.

■ Might as well call it the Brazen Chutzpah Award. Two weeks after sending in her SWAT team to seize—sorry, rescue—Elián González from his family in Miami, Janet Reno was awarded the Ellis Island Medal of Honor during a ceremony on the island itself. Could the medal have been awarded in recognition of our attorney general's efforts on behalf of huddled masses yearning to breathe free? Free from the oppressive attentions of an extended family, free from prayer vigils in the street, free from . . . Diane Sawyer? Reno managed to get through the ceremony with a straight face, urging in her acceptance speech that we "reach out to start to listen to each other." After first giving our Cuban minders time to switch on their recording devices, of course.

■ In trying to fight inflation, what the Federal Reserve is really fighting now is growth. In the early 1990s, when Reagan appointees sat on the board, Alan Greenspan paid close attention to financial price signals and money-supply numbers in formulating policy. A flock of Clinton appointees, however, has turned the Fed back to the nostrum that falling unemployment spurs inflation. The Fed therefore feels it must weaken the economy and undermine the stock market. April's benign price reports and sluggish retail sales should convince the Federal Reserve that the only thing it has to fear is—itself.

■ Ford Motor Company, under the leadership of William Clay Ford Jr., has tried to develop the image of an environmental leader in American industry. Now the company is finding fault with one of its most profitable products, the sport utility vehicle. SUVs are the bête noire of environmentalists, who claim they pollute too much and burn too much gas. Rather than defend its vehicles as meeting consumer demand for flexibility, comfort, cargo space, and safety, Ford announced that it is guilty as charged. The company published its first "corporate citizenship report," complete with commentary from the Sierra Club condemning SUVs as "a rolling monument to environmental destruction." If Ford is serious about this rhetoric, it's time to short this stock.

■ The House Armed Services Committee voted to require 120 days' notice before the administration begins to assign women to submarines. The civilian women who are goading the administration have never encountered a submarine except at Blimpie's, but they are demanding that the Navy redesign new subs to accommodate women. Says the Navy, such a redesign would eliminate operational equipment and reduce combat effectiveness. If the feminists are to be beaten back on this issue, the "silent service" will have to find its voice.

■ The Supreme Court, in a 5–4 decision, moved to put some outer limits on the scope of federal power. At issue was a provision of the Violence Against Women Act, passed in 1994, that gave victims of assaults motivated by "gender bias" the right to go to federal court to collect damages from their assailants. Such crimes of violence are, of course, already covered by state laws. The Clinton administration's constitutional rationale for a federal law was Washington's power to "regulate commerce among the states." The Court ruled, sensibly enough, that assaults have nothing to do with commerce. This recognition does not amount, as Justice Thomas noted, to a return to a commonsense interpretation of the commerce clause. But the decision shows that the Court's turn toward federalism over the last decade, however slight, will not be reversed. Unless, that is, Al Gore gets to pick a justice or two.

■ The IRA is not going to give up its guns, period. As Gerry Adams, its Sinn Fein mouthpiece, puts it, the IRA has not been defeated militarily in the past 30 years "and is not going to allow itself to be defeated in a peace process." How then is it to be admitted to the future power-sharing arrangements proposed for Ulster? Easy: The IRA chief of staff proposes to allow two outside inspectors to verify that its arms are in sealed, and therefore harmless, depots. How will these inspectors be certain that there are no secret dumps? Because the IRA says so. By means of this sleight of hand, IRA terrorists are at last to enter power at gunpoint. Liam Cairns is a teenager who can explain what this means. Ten hooded IRA men broke into his home at 2:30 A.M. and beat him so savagely that he will be crippled for life. Apparently he had been joyriding in the car of a well-known republican. The British

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Global Perils in Perspective

Robert Conquest is a senior research fellow and scholar-curator of the Russian and Commonwealth of Independent States Collection at the Hoover Institution.

War, revolution, and peace are the themes to which the Hoover Institution, of which I am a fellow, is formally dedicated. The first two are what we cope with. The last is what we hope and work for; it now prevails over a large, but by no means as yet decisive, part of the earth.

Revolution, in the extreme twentieth-century sense of the seizure of power by a fanatic ideological group, has largely faded. But we do see destructive revolutions fueled by lesser aims, and the heirs of the old totalitarian revolutions remain in power in a number of untrustworthy countries, some of them equipped with nuclear weapons.

As for war, minor wars keep breaking out and the threat of larger and worse conflicts still looms.

From the knowledge accumulated on the background and history of the world, what have we learned? We can certainly see that the lessons have not been properly attended to—in part because of Western failure to see that the necessary education is given to our citizens and politicians.

What, then, are the lessons that need learning? First, **history is an immensely complex weave of facts and forces that produces unforeseeable concatenations,** especially so in what has become a global, and thus even more complex, perspective. We must cover what may appear to us now as unlikely eventualities.

Another major lesson from history is that powerful human beings and movements have acted irrationally, both in the sense that they harbored insane ideas and in the sense that they miscalculated and misunderstood the motives and intentions of others.

The world will not be safe unless the open society, and nations not possessed by modern fanaticisms and archaic enmities, prevails everywhere. Clearly the largely Western political culture is the hope and can be the core of such a development.

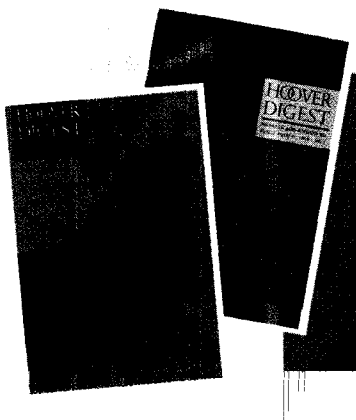
But the necessary elements of the Western-style political and economic order do not emerge easily among culturally dissimilar populations. That order requires not only sound institutions and the rule of law but also the development of pluralist habits of mind.

The conclusions to be drawn from the century's history are, one would have thought, unavoidable. **We can have no lasting and stable world peace until the conditions prevailing in, and between, the advanced democratic countries are established everywhere.** Meanwhile, our tasks are not merely to provide a pluralist model but also to see that the superior technology so far achieved be used in defense of our present and the world's future. Military and political necessity dictates that the Western, and especially the American, lead in defense technology be not only maintained at the research level but actually deployed in weapons systems of a type and quantity that even the most ideology-crazed rulers cannot underestimate. At the same time, our foreign policy must be conducted in a manner they cannot misunderstand.

A truly crucial corollary is that the United States should not be inveigled into committing itself to attractive-sounding, but worthless or actively deleterious, arms treaties that other signatories in any case have no intention of observing.

— Robert Conquest

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



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government may be willing to be humiliated for ever and a day by an IRA contemptuous of democracy, but such appeasement is likely to provoke despairing Ulster loyalists to look after themselves, their own guns in hand.

■ Mexico's slow march to modernity will be greatly accelerated if conservative Vicente Fox defeats Francisco Labastida, the candidate of the long-ruling PRI party, in July's presidential election. Fox whipped Labastida in a recent presidential debate, and pollster John Zogby now has the center-right candidate leading the PRI-ista 46–42. Fox favors broad-based tax cuts and hard money. Backed by the entrepreneurs of northern Mexico, he is also a deregulator who is expected to take major steps to privatize monopolies in banking, energy, and communications. The PRI may unleash its usual brass-knuckle election tactics, but Mexican voters seem ready to resist. If they do, a President Bush might find political conditions ripe for a dollarized free-trade zone uniting the Americas, enhancing prosperity and serving as a model worldwide.

■ The Baltic republic of Latvia has been attempting some housecleaning. It has already jailed for crimes against humanity two former members of the Soviet secret police. A third one, Vasiliy Kononov, was found guilty of ordering the murder of civilians in the village of Mazie Bati in 1944. He appealed, claiming that he had been a Soviet partisan dealing with anti-Communist villagers. The Latvian supreme court decided to release him pending further investigation. But earlier on the very day of that decision, President Putin of Russia decreed that Kononov held a valid Russian passport, and this document was delivered to the court by the Russian ambassador in person. An uproar ensued. The drama of the passport and its delivery to the court had evidently been staged. The president of Latvia, Vaira Vike-Freiberga, affirmed that the Latvian judiciary is independent, but went on to say that Putin's intervention was "unaccountable and curious." Such cautious phrasing conceals fear that Russian tanks on the horizon will roll in on any pretext. If Putin is indeed a bright young reformer and liberal, we will have to see some very different evidence from this.

■ In the 16 months since its sickly birth, the euro has sunk from a value of $1.17 to around 89 cents. The euro's parents and guardians in Brussels and Frankfurt have no idea what to do, whether to raise interest rates, or to intervene in the currency markets, or to wait helplessly for an inflationary free fall. The private-capital flight out of euroland is estimated to be over $100 billion so far. Those who cannot take safety measures are condemned to watch their assets, pension prospects, and savings shrink every day. A former French prime minister says that "the impression is spreading that European construction has broken down." *Bild*, the popular German tabloid, has asked on its front page whether there is not still time to escape from the euro. In almost all euro countries, opinion polls show that large majorities wish to back out of the single currency, or at least to postpone it. Officially, that is not an option. In which case, there are only two possible results: success, or one of those crashes that ruin and embitter all concerned.

■ Another milestone has been passed on the steady progress of AIDS from its origins as a mere venereal disease to being the driving force behind all government policy. The Clinton administration has formally designated the disease a threat to national security, placing the government's efforts to combat AIDS overseas under the aegis of the National Security Council. How cynical of us to notice that this decision follows the adoption of AIDS in Africa as a major cause by black leaders such as former congressman Ron Dellums and Rep. Jesse L. Jackson Jr. AIDS activists and black leaders—a two-for-one pander! And more yet: What has all these people steamed is the high cost of anti-retroviral drugs, so there are opportunities here to lash out at pharmaceutical companies, and, by extension, at the entire system of private health care. The Clinton people who thought this up must be exchanging high-fives. It is unlikely that anyone in the current administration has paused to ask: What does this do to the concept of national security? If AIDS in Angola is a threat to national security, why not malaria in Malaysia, yaws in Yorubaland, bilharzia in Belize? Having thus expanded the scope of things that the NSC has to worry about, will there be anyone left to count Chinese missiles? Just wondering.

■ While America struggled with the "I love you" computer virus, devout Muslims had a different problem with their e-mail. Under Islamic law, a man can divorce his wife by saying "I divorce you" to her (if certain conditions obtain). A gentleman in the United Arab Emirates recently cut the knot thus by e-mail. His wife objected that this was invalid, and Islamic jurists are now wrestling with the issue. Until they have pronounced definitively, a word of caution to our married female Muslim readers: If you get an e-mail with the subject "I divorce you," *don't open it.*

■ Edward Egan, new Roman Catholic archbishop of New York, is a 68-year-old canon lawyer well connected to Pope John Paul II. His recent duties, mostly in Rome, have kept him out of the American public's eye, but when he was briefly auxiliary bishop in New York in the mid '80s, he testified before the city council against a proposal to hand out contraceptives in high school: "Try decency. Try chastity. Try Western civilization." Not popular options at any time, but, as his life ends, the Pope seems determined to encourage his followers to keep trying.

■ Amy Grossberg has been released, after not quite serving a two-and-a-half-year prison sentence for killing her newborn. After a motel-room birth, Grossberg and her college "sweetheart" fractured the infant's skull, stuffed him in a plastic bag,

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and left him to die in a nearby dumpster. Before conviction, Grossberg's lawyers assured the world that the girl did not "blame" anyone—not herself, not her ex-boyfriend, Brian Peterson. In a statement made through her lawyer, Grossberg promises us she is forward-looking. And, their spokesmen tell us, Amy and Brian won't be getting back together, neither wanting to live in the past. Their child would have turned three last November.

■ Homosexuality is perfectly normal. It is not objectionable or unhealthy in any way whatsoever. It has absolutely no connection with pedophilia. Professional psychological and psychiatric associations have ruled that homosexuality is not sufficiently abnormal to be pathological or diagnostically relevant. Anyone who publicly voices opinions different from these is guilty of incitement to violence and brutality. Thus, in summary, the opinion of the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council, ruling on complaints received about Dr. Laura Schlessinger's radio show. The old joke is of a man advanced in years who says: "In my grandfather's time, they used to hang buggers. In my father's time, they put them in jail. Now it's legal. I hope I die before they make it compulsory." That day is almost upon us.

■ In 1950, Father William "Father Bill" Nolan became the Catholic chaplain at Dartmouth, a highly effective religious leader, and also a beloved presence. He was one of four priests in the period following WWII who tried to establish an institutional Catholic bridgehead in the historically Protestant Ivy League. All the others failed: Murray at Yale was inexplicably denied tenure; Feeney at Harvard was much too successful at converting prominent undergraduates and was forced out; Halton at Princeton got into too many political quarrels with the faculty. Quietly, Msgr. Nolan succeeded. He raised the funds and built the magnificent Aquinas House and a basilica-style church, he drew almost one-fourth of the student body to Mass, and he was responsible for around 40 vocations to the priesthood. Learned, quietly very powerful, he has died at 82 in a retirement home in Manchester, N.H. R.I.P.

■ Seen on a banner at the May 7 rally for cop-killer and left-wing cause célèbre Mumia Abu-Jamal, at Madison Square Garden: "AFRICAN ANCESTRAL LESBIANS UNITED FOR SOCIETAL CHANGE, INC. (FORMERLY SALSA SOUL SISTERS)." Be sure to update your Rolodex.

■ A magazine called *Pagan Revival* recently arrived in the mail. It's an anti-Christian periodical endorsing the Norse pantheon of gods and promoting white-racist ideologies. One of its more interesting articles—"The Satanic Bible: A Revelation or a fraud?"—accuses Anton LaVey, author of the notorious *Satanic Bible*, of plagiarism. And so America, A.D. 2000, reaches a new cultural milestone: The Aryan racist pagans are accusing the Satanists of intellectual dishonesty.

PUBLIC POLICY

Bush's Breakthrough

THE test of statesmanship is to combine a clear-eyed understanding of policy with political prudence. On entitlements, George W. Bush has aced that test, outlining on May 15 the principles of a free-market reform of Medicare and Social Security.

Bush begins, wisely enough, by establishing that he is not ideologically hostile to these programs—by declaring, for instance, that "Social Security is the single most successful government program in American history." He reassures current beneficiaries of the programs that he will not disrupt their arrangements. He reassures younger people that they will be able to stay in the current system if they so wish. He lays great stress on the bipartisan support for his ideas: Democratic senators John Breaux, Bob Kerrey, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan have all endorsed the investment by individuals of some Social Security funds. Bush explicitly rules out the possibility of raising taxes to make the entitlements solvent, and also rules out the potentially disastrous idea of letting the federal government invest payroll-tax revenues in private capital markets.

In describing his goals for Social Security, Bush eschews the word "privatize" in favor of such words as "save," "strengthen," and "modernize." This is not wholly a matter of public relations: "Privatization" usually means contracting out a government service to a private company, and therefore does not well describe a policy of letting individuals exercise choice within a program run by the government.

The criticism of Bush has followed several lines. Al Gore says his plan would be—what else?—risky. But Bush has several defenses. He says that there will be "basic standards of safety and soundness" so that "there will be no fly-by-night speculators or day trading." Against the risks of investment, he sets both the risks of the current system and "the security of ownership." Private accounts, he notes, can be passed on to children. Gore also says that the program cannot work because the government will have to bail out individuals who make poor investments—a problem that need not arise if the program is designed properly, and a more manageable problem than the abysmal investment the current system forces everyone to make. (Note, by the way, that Gore is thus arguing that Bush's plan is simultaneously too risky and not risky enough for individuals—the government would have to provide a safety net.)

Finally, editorialists complain that Bush has not said how he would pay for current benefits while also letting workers invest. Actually, he has: Workers would be able to invest *surplus* Social Security funds. There would be a financing problem ten to fifteen years down the road. But Bush's plan would not increase the system's liabilities as a whole, and it is perfectly legitimate to defer the financing questions until later. Gore's solution, by contrast, is to issue some IOUs from tax-

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"A Veritable Treasure House."

—Henry A. Kissinger

Since young Buckley took Yale to task almost 50 years ago, he has been taking the English language out for invigorating romps. As a result, his collected speeches are a high-spirited tour through the great controversies that have shaped both politics and culture. If you doubt that, or wonder why it is that Bill Buckley is the most consequential journalist and most skillful controversialist of our time, this delightful volume is for you. It is also for any reader who relishes wit in the service of moral convictions.

Bill Buckley is a master of English diction, an unsurpassed wit, and the sharpest mind of contemporary conservatism. As a confirmed liberal who is his dissenting friend, I recommend this impressive collection of speeches and commentary to conservatives and liberals alike. The collection is a national treasure.

The book is perfect for either the bathroom or a desert island—either for a quick fix or the one book for lifetime isolation.

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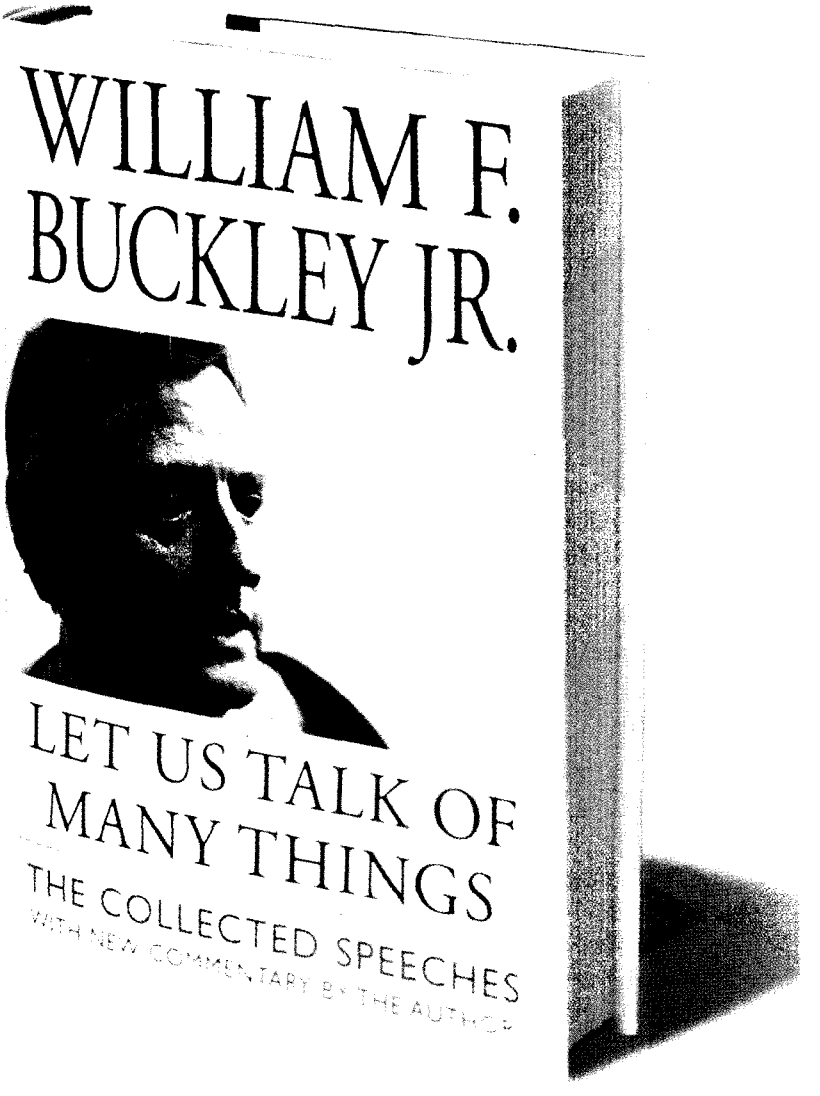

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payers to the Social Security system—without any plan whatsoever for paying off those IOUs. If Gore is able to pose as the candidate of fiscal responsibility, it will be a tribute to the willful gullibility of journalists.

With Bush having gone so far in the right direction, it seems almost churlish to point out that he omitted some points that would be helpful to his case. He could have made his argument about risk and security stronger if he had pointed out that workers have no legal right to Social Security benefits under the current system. He did not explain that the tax cuts he proposes would promote growth and thus make it easier to finance Social Security and Medicare; he therefore left himself vulnerable to the criticism that his tax cuts would endanger the programs. Nor did he explain that free-market reform of Social Security would itself boost the economy by expanding the capital stock.

But Bush will have plenty of opportunities to make these points. The big picture was sketched out by Richard Nadler, chairman of the American Shareholders Association, on NR's website: "For the first time since 1980, the Republican presidential nominee has enunciated a strategy that enlarges the GOP base on conservative principles." Bush has captured the rhetorical high ground of being "forward looking." And he has finally hit on a campaign theme that usefully frames the debate over both the policies and the personalities of the two candidates: Bush trusts Americans to manage their own lives; Gore does not.

CHINA

For Free Trade

CONGRESS is set to vote on a bill establishing "permanent normal trade relations" between China and the United States. Opponents have assembled an impressively wide-ranging coalition including labor unions, human-rights activists, Christian conservatives, and defense hawks. What they have not assembled is an impressive argument against open trade with China.

Their complaints about China are certainly well grounded. China has made menacing noises and gestures toward our ally Taiwan. It violates its subjects' religious and political freedoms, sometimes murderously. Its one-child policy, including forced abortions, is brutal. Its leaders regularly express resentment of American power. It is also true that the Clinton administration's policy toward China has been willfully blind about these grim realities, subordinating both moral and strategic concerns to commercial ones.

Obviously, China's behavior needs changing. The question is whether blocking normal trade relations with China will improve that behavior. As Owen Harries has recently observed, China's behavior was far worse than it is now when America tried to contain and isolate the country. The period from 1949 to the early 1970s, he writes, "was one of the most disastrous not only in Chinese history but in all of human history: a ruthless tyranny prevailed, millions of Chinese were killed by the regime or died because of its insane policies, obscurantism ruled, the economy was reduced to a shambles. Internationally, China actively supported subversion and insurrection throughout its region, fought a war against India, and even tried its hand at intervention in Africa."

Since then, trade has facilitated an enormous rise in living standards and personal freedom for ordinary Chinese. This rise is not nearly enough to make China a just society; but it is already enough to make the analogy to the Soviet Union pressed by China's American critics risible. The examples of North Korea and Cuba do not suggest that a continued refusal to trade with China would have led to similar results.

Under the terms of the present deal, China agrees to cut tariffs and restrictions on American agriculture, industrial products, banking, insurance, telecommunications, and movies, and to make other economic reforms. In return, the United States merely accepts China into the World Trade Organization and gives up its annual review of China's trade status. Opponents of the deal say that in giving up that annual review we are forfeiting our leverage—never mind that this review has never once led to revocation and that the opponents' own argument, that China has been getting worse and not better, suggests that this "leverage" has not achieved much. Besides, a commitment to free trade with China does not preclude a more hardheaded policy on the defense of Taiwan, the export of militarily sensitive technology, and so on.

A vote for normal trade relations is a vote to reduce the power of the Chinese state. It is an action that both our allies in Taiwan and the most well-intentioned members of the Chinese government hope we will take. We should.

OBITUARY

John Cardinal O'Connor, R.I.P.

JOHN CARDINAL O'CONNOR was, by virtue of the size of his archdiocese, a major figure in American Catholicism, and by virtue of the media eminence of New York, a major figure in American public life generally. He played the public role to a T, often taking positions that gave solace to the Left. When unions struck the *Daily News* in the early '90s, O'Connor backed them, even though many of the strikers were mobbed-up thugs. But the cardinal, the son of a painter of gold leaf, came from the kind of working-class family that was the backbone of the Roosevelt coalition. O'Connor stuck by his roots.

When his roots, his mind, and his faith ran contrary to the modern Left, he was not afraid to say *that* either. He was installed as archbishop in 1984, when Gov. Mario Cuomo, the Angelic Doctor of liberal Catholics, and Geraldine Ferraro, their toy terrier, were explaining that Catholics could indeed be in favor of abortion as a public policy. The cardinal explained, firmly and mildly, that, no, they couldn't. It was the end, no great matter, of Mondale-Ferraro, and, in

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the long run, the beginning of the end of Mario Cuomo.

But Cardinal O'Connor put his warmth, intelligence, and humor to the service above all of his role as a priest. So serious was his commitment that it shone through in random, secular occasions. One October, Ronald Reagan attended the annual Al Smith dinner, a charity fundraiser that is nominally Catholic, but in fact a social and political display ritual. Reagan gave a tribute to O'Connor's predecessor, Terrence Cardinal Cooke, describing a visit with him on the eve of his death. Cooke promised to keep praying for Reagan "when I join the Lord," then added that he might be "a little presumptuous." "None of us have any doubt," Reagan concluded huskily, "that he joined the Lord." It was vintage Reagan, schmaltzy and serious both. O'Connor saw him and raised him: Cooke "had no doubt he would be with the Lord; it was *you* he was worried about." It was perfectly timed, light as a laugh; and it reintroduced, gently but insistently, the proper perspective: No one, however mighty or good, deserves a place with the Lord, though He offers one to each of us.

Now O'Connor himself is dead, at the age of 80. No one, as he reminded us, may be presumptuous. But we may—we should—hope.

■ NOTES & ASIDES ■

■ Dear Bill: "Johannes Eff" rides again. Hope you'll enjoy.

Cordially,
Jack Kiley
Portland, Ore.

William F. Buckley Jr. and Pope Peter II
A Funversation

WFB: No sooner do I conclude my long *Firing Line* service,
When my Doppelgänger, underemployed and nervous,
Presses me into postpartum jive
With yet another Famous Person Who Was Never Alive.
Remember when Robin Hood stuck up the studio;
When Huck Finn rafted in with his Mississippi lingo;
When Gunga Din gave me that thirst-quenching swig
of Ganges water;
When The Queen unsettled Alice with her no-jam-today
order?
Now Mr. Eff has somehow persuaded his fictional pope
To ride his encyclical here for what I sincerely hope
Will not be another accommodationist *apologia*
For Rome's "crimes" against the crazy idea
Of how we all evolved from primordial soup,
Blindly spiked with the right dose of Big Bang poop.
Would you welcome to our show,
His Holiness, Pope Peter II, from the Land of Cogito.

Peter II: Thank you, Mr. Buckley. Know that I came to get a rise
Out of you, not to catechize.

WFB: How will you do that, pray tell?

Peter II: By advising you I have used my papal keys to release Stalin
from Hell.
Also Hitler, Pol Pot, and Robin Hood.

WFB: Robin Hood went to Hell? Why? He did a lot of good.

Peter II: He kept breaking the 8th Commandment, Mr. Buckley.
I came to his rescue, luck'ly.

WFB: It must have been a great relief for him, no?
Also for any other denizen of Dante's Inferno.

Peter II: I dispossessed the lot of them, once they were contrite.
It's called *apocatastasis*. Your kind of word, right?

WFB: I have just the spot for it in my next column.

Peter II: Use "The Final Restoration" instead. Much less solumn.

WFB: I'm troubled: An imaginary pope cannot prevail,
ontologically,
Against the gates of a real Hell, surely.

Peter II: You think not, I take it?

WFB: I think that all a fake pope can do is: fake it.

Peter II: Well, maybe you have another think coming.

WFB: Truthfully, I find this kind of conversation numbing.

Peter II: Why? If you can discuss weighty issues with Gunga Din,
Alice, Huckleberry Finn, and Robin
Hood, why can't you cope
With an imaginary pope?

WFB: Maybe because none of my other Famous People Who
Never Lived knew they weren't real at all.

Peter II: I've had advantages, like the metaphysics of Aquinas at my
beck and call.

WFB: Did that make you real?

Peter II: Only a real fiction. And therefore equipped with a feel
For other fictions, including that of Mr. Darwin, which
Has gulled vast numbers of gullibles, many rich
In academic credentials, including armies of scienti-
Zers, into thinking the Theory of Evolution explains why.
You are not one of them, Mr. Buckley, I dearly hope.

WFB: Nope.

Peter II: Is this because of your faith in the existence of God?

WFB: I like to think it's because I, too, have a "feel" for fictions.

Peter II: How do you account for having such a feel?

WFB: I credit it to God's unfailing love for me: In His mercy He
has kept me from The Supreme Stupidity.

Peter II: Which is? Let's see . . .

WFB: Believing that Darwin is right about the origin of you
and me.

Peter II: May I put in a plug at this point for my autobiography?

WFB: If you admit that *you* wrote all those papal allegations,
many of which, I'm sad to say, are unorthodox.

JEFF: My publisher will have multiple shocks,
But, yes, I am the alligator.

WFB: We've got a deal. See you later.

—Johannes Eff

—WFB

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■ CAMPAIGN 2000 ■

The Trouble with Ridge

It's not just abortion

JOHN J. MILLER

THE worst moment in Tom Ridge's campaign to become George W. Bush's running mate may have come in a state where Ridge doesn't live and at an event he didn't attend. Bush was sitting in the second row at St. Patrick's Cathedral during John Cardinal O'Connor's funeral Mass on May 8 when Bernard Cardinal Law, giving the homily, declared that the Catholic Church "must always be unambiguously pro-life." If Bush learned anything from listening to the loud applause that lasted for about two minutes following the remark, it's this: The GOP nominates a pro-choice Catholic for vice president at its peril.

And that's the conventional rap against Ridge. The 54-year-old Republican governor of Pennsylvania has been unambiguously in favor of abortion rights throughout his political career, despite the fact that he's Catholic (he attends weekly Mass) and that his views put him out of sync with most of his party, including Bush. He hasn't always gone overboard to make amends, either. When a group of pro-lifers visited his congressional office in 1984, Ridge asked them starkly, "Does the government have a right to force a woman to be an incubator for nine months for another individual?" More recently, in 1998, the bishop in Ridge's hometown of Erie, Pa., announced that pro-choice Catholic pols aren't welcome at church-sponsored events. Bishop Donald Trautman didn't specifically name Ridge, but everybody knew whom he was talking about. "It pains me to disagree with my faith community," says the governor, whose kids go to Catholic school. "But it's a very difficult, personal decision that belongs ultimately to the woman."

Despite these troubles, the flap over abortion may actually help Ridge's ambitions in an unexpected way. Because virtually all of the speculation over his nomination has focused on abortion politics, many Republicans are left with a vague impression that Ridge is another one of the GOP's reform-minded governors—an ideological cousin of Michigan's John Engler or Wisconsin's Tommy Thompson. But that's a mistake. Ridge is not a conservative who happens to be pro-choice; he's a liberal Republican who happens to have done a handful of conservative things as governor. Putting him on the ticket is a fateful bargain. Perhaps he can overcome pro-life outrage and help Bush get elected this year. But at what cost down the road?

Tom Ridge
by Roman Genn

The case for Ridge is fairly straightforward: Two separate polls this spring show Bush slightly ahead of Vice President Gore in Pennsylvania, and increasing his lead by several points if he runs with Ridge. That's 23 electoral votes in a state Gore can't well afford to lose. What's more, Ridge has a personal biography right out of central casting. He grew up in a working-class family, earned a scholarship to Harvard, and later enlisted in the Army and fought in Vietnam. There he won a Bronze Star "for exceptionally valorous actions."

Bush first met Ridge in 1980, when Ridge was a supporter of Bush's father during the Republican primaries and George W. was traveling in Pennsylvania. Two years later, Ridge won a House seat by just 729 votes in a district full of union members. He was reelected five times, but the races were never very close—perhaps because Ridge became one of the Reagan administration's leading Republican adversaries in Congress.

Just as most Pennsylvania Democrats are more conservative than the national party, Pennsylvania Republicans are typically more liberal. Ridge fits the mold. Between 1984 and 1988, for example, he was more likely to oppose President Reagan's position on a given issue than he was to support it, according to a *Congressional Quarterly* analysis. In 1987 and '88, he aligned himself with the Reagan White House only 40 percent of the time. He supported President Bush somewhat more often, but he still lagged far behind the typical House Republican. Following a minimum-wage vote on which Ridge was one of only 19 Republicans to favor a hike, a reporter asked Pennsylvania congressman Bill Goodling whether Ridge had any friends left in Congress. "On our side of the aisle, he would have none," replied Goodling.

But, again, it was a tough district. If a Republican must cast union-friendly votes to hold the seat, Republicans argued, then so be it. Better that than a Democrat who won't stand with the GOP on anything.

Except that Ridge held a number of positions that can't be explained by devotion to his blue-collar constituents. At a time when Reagan was peeling off Democrats on Cold War issues, Ridge consistently played the dove. He voted to support the nuclear freeze, abolish the MX missile, deny funding to the Nicaraguan contra rebels, and adopt Pat Schroeder's plan to bar nuclear tests above one kiloton.

On funding for the Strategic Defense

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Initiative, Ridge wasn't just a "no" vote, but a leader in the enemy camp. In 1989, he teamed up with representative Charles E. Bennett, Democrat of Florida, in a *Christian Science Monitor* op-ed that criticized SDI as the sorry result of "a lot of dreaming." Ridge and Bennett then authored a successful amendment slashing the SDI budget from $4.9 billion to $3.1 billion. They struck again a year later, leading the charge to reduce SDI's funding to $2.3 billion. "The SDI mission continues to evolve—the leakproof shield is history," Ridge said afterward. Two years later, he was one of just eleven Republicans to support stripping another $1 billion from the program.

Ridge seemed to go out of his way to tweak Republicans. In 1996, he reminisced in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* about how he "gave all those Republicans heartburn" with his various stances. Four years earlier, while still in Congress, he penned an op-ed for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* blasting President Bush's "obsession" with a capital-gains tax cut: "About all it will do will be to churn the stock market and increase the profits of stock brokers and traders." That's not exactly the message George W. wants to convey to the investor class this year.

As governor, Ridge has compiled a mixed record. "If you compare him to the alternatives—such as a liberal Democrat—he's great," says James Broussard, head of Citizens Against Higher Taxes, the state's leading taxpayer group. "If you compare him to what conservatives would like, he doesn't look so good." Ridge has reformed welfare and worker's compensation, held out against gun control, and signed more than 200 death warrants. But he also raised the gas tax, presides over a budget that accounts for one-sixth of all state-level economic-development spending in the country, and now stands idly by as one of his departments tries to shut down day-care centers run by churches and synagogues that resist state licensing. Ridge has cut business taxes, but these remain high compared with other states. And only a portion of Pennsylvania's current $583 million budget surplus will return to the pockets of taxpayers.

School choice is another sore point. The state legislature came close to passing it several times in the 1990s, both before and during Ridge's time in office. The governor has lobbied for the cause—but many Pennsylvania conservatives wonder if he's really done enough. Following his big reelection win in 1998, they felt that Ridge had amassed the political capital to make a successful push for vouchers. Instead, the governor devoted himself almost wholly to a controversial debt-financing bill for high-cost sports stadiums in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. He was at the height of his political power, and he chose to build skyboxes. "Why didn't he go the distance for school choice?" asks Sean Duffy of the Commonwealth Foundation, a think tank in Harrisburg.

Conservatives also grumble about Ridge's personnel decisions. "He's made very liberal appointments in Harrisburg," says Michael Geer of the Pennsylvania Family Institute. Adds Charlie Gerow, a prominent conservative who backed Ridge in the 1994 gubernatorial primary, "I'm hard-pressed to name even a single conservative on his staff." Ridge's deputy chief of staff, in fact, has close ties to the Clinton White House; she and her husband, a generous Democratic donor, slept in the Lincoln Bedroom in 1996.

Any vice-presidential pick is important, but particularly for the GOP, which has a tendency to nominate candidates for president when it's "their turn." That means there's a good chance Bush's running mate this fall will be the Republican presidential nominee the next time Bush doesn't run, especially if the GOP regains the White House in November. Nailing down Pennsylvania for the Republicans this fall is tempting—but it's a deal that may have important consequences for conservatives in 2004 or 2008.

In April, Ridge caused a minor stir when he said that he thought the GOP should change its pro-life platform. He hasn't retreated from that belief, but now he's careful to moderate it. "I expressed a personal opinion. I've never been part of any effort to do that and won't be this year," he says. "We should be fighting Al Gore, not each other."

No matter what the issue—abortion, missile defense, the capital-gains tax—that's pretty good advice. **NR**

■ THE NATION ■

Moms Away

The new brand of gun nut

ANDREW STUTTAFORD

It's not so much what they said (although that was bad enough), but how they said it. Several hundred thousand gun nuts were gathered on the Mall. They were hectoring, self-righteous, and, when it came to firearms, quite incapable of rational discussion. I'm referring, of course, to the "Million Moms" and their march. It was Mother's Day 2000. The Moms were in D.C. to call for "commonsense" gun control—licensing, registration, the usual thin edges of the wedge. There was opposition from the Second Amendment Sisters, but theirs was only a small rebel encampment, all baseball caps and American flags. This day belonged to the other side, to the pink and white T-shirts of the Million Mom March. It was a triumph for Donna Dees-Thomases, the self-styled "suburban mom" who organized the march. It had taken around nine months to set up. As Mrs. Dees-Thomases, a publicist by trade, likes to say, "women understand what you can create in nine months."

The march itself (which was really more of a rally) was impressive, seemingly flush with cash (thanks for the free bottled water!), and well organized. There were tents, placards, posters, pink banners (but rarely the Stars and Stripes) fluttering in the breeze. Charlton Heston didn't show, but there were plenty of other celebrities, all under the command of a stern-faced Rosie O'Donnell. The Moms themselves were a disciplined bunch, standing for hours under a hot early-summer sun, attentive to the speeches coming from a large stage. They could

Mr. Stuttaford is a frequent contributor to National Review.

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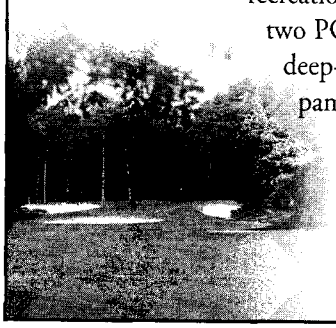

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also gaze at a number of giant screens dotted around the Mall that showed images of the audience, the speakers, and, from time to time, misleading statistics of the "if you have a gun in the house you are doomed" variety. This being the United States of Oprah, there were occasional moments of tears and communal hugging, but not too many. This was a disproportionately upscale group, more restrained, Katie Couric rather than Erin Brockovich.

It was also a crowd of dupes. The Million Mom March was brilliantly manipulative agitprop, a textbook example of how the Left will find a potentially popular, modest-sounding issue and twist it in a way to help along their agenda.

Not that they will admit it. These campaigns are always portrayed as being above mere politics. Donna Dees-Thomases is at pains to stress that her cause is "bipartisan." It is, of course, unfair, very unfair, to draw any conclusions from the fact that her sister-in-law is Susan Thomases, a longtime confidante of Hillary Rodham Clinton, but if this rally was independent it was only in a very NPR sort of way. Hillary herself attended the march, and her husband videotaped a message of support. Gore 2000 stickers and signs were everywhere. I did see one placard concerning George W., but it suggested that he "wasn't fit to run a laundromat." On the podium the (so to speak) big guns were more discreet. Susan Sarandon briefly slipped the leash with a speech that seemed to be headed in the direction of five-year plans and the collectivization of agriculture, but most speakers stuck to the subject—"commonsense," limited firearms legislation. That was their single issue, they claimed, and "in November" they want it to be the Moms' too. If it is, Al Gore will be in the White House and, ultimately, the Bill of Rights will be in the outhouse.

They may succeed. Gun control resonates with all those suburban moms who feel that firearms are, well, icky. Back in the early 1980s, *their* mothers or aunts or older sisters used to feel the same way about cruise missiles. Disarmament then, and now, is a perfect wedge issue that can be pitched purely at the emotional level. Speaker after speaker talked of an epidemic of gun violence. Singer Melissa Etheridge kept "hearing a lot of fear." Well, yes, Melissa. That's because of events like this march. Death, we were led to believe, stalks the suburbs and the schoolyard, and he's packing heat. In fact, over the last 20

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If the Million Mom March was independent it was only in a very NPR sort of way.

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years the murder rate's down and firearms-related accidents have fallen dramatically. All this at a time when gun ownership has greatly expanded. Even schools are safer. But you won't have heard those facts at this rally.

The Moms aren't big on facts or reasoned argument. Their spin kit ("Public Relations 101") has firm instructions for supporters wanting to publicize the march on TV or in the newspaper: "Before your interview, inform the local media contact that you will not engage in debate with others." To discussion, these mothers, like others in the "progressive" camp, prefer the coercive language of crisis (health care, global warming, you name it) to push their agenda. It's an approach that works best when it can be tied in with real tragedies. And so it was on the Mall. Homemade placards bore the pictures of murdered loved ones. Speakers included a teacher from Columbine, grieving mothers, and crippled children, a trail of tears designed to lead to only one conclusion. There was, of course, no mention of those thousands whose lives have

By Roman Genn

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NewsMax.com Special Report

Hillary Just Can't Stop Laughing...

Why is Hillary Clinton laughing at you?

The darling of the liberal media, Hillary Clinton is the architect of the most dangerous big government socialist policies to come out of Washington, D.C. in 50 years.

Among her initiatives was a plan to nationalize America's health care system. Hillary's takeover of your health care would have given the government literal life and death power over you and your family. Now Hillary, with the backing of the establishment media, wants to be a U.S. Senator. Her close friends say she really wants to be president.

Because the media won't tell you the truth about Hillary, she's getting the last laugh – at your expense! The press won't report her radical agenda – from public funding of obscene art, such as the dung covered Madonna – to her support for radical Puerto Rican terrorists.

When was the last time the major media asked Hillary about her "record"?:

- The famous cattle futures deal in which she made a cool $100,000 in one day — a deal that New York Times Columnist William Safire called an out and out bribe.
- Hillary's work as the attorney for Madison Guaranty — an S&L federal regulators say defrauded taxpayers like you for $60 million.
- Her Whitewater land scam where she and her husband put practically no money down but took massive losses on their taxes.
- Filegate: the illegal procurement of over 1,000 FBI files of her political opponents.
- The raid by Hillary's Chief of Staff into Vince Foster's office on the night of his suspicious death.
- Hillary's role in the Travelgate matter, when career civil servants were fired on trumped up charges and Billy Dale, the head of the office was prosecuted (and later acquitted) in one of the worst examples of judicial police state tactics ever.
- Her active role in the Chinagate scandal — campaign cash for nuclear secrets.

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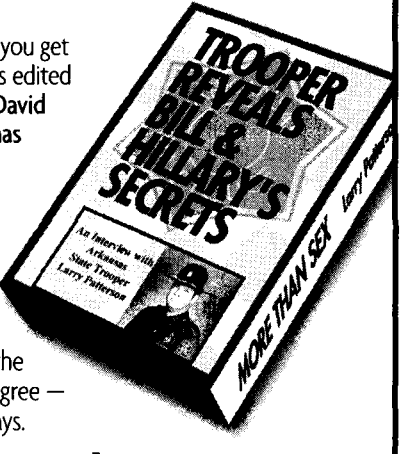

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been saved by the defensive use of guns.

Yes, thousands, probably far more. But as Mrs. Dees-Thomases understands, what politician is brave enough to raise that point with a teacher from Columbine? Just in case someone does dare, the Moms' leader has another arrow in her quiver. She has labeled her march a campaign for "safe kids." As she knows, Americans seem to accept any number of restrictions on their freedom so long as they are allegedly for the benefit of "the children," the Trojan Ponies of our liberty. To this end, the Moms' keynote deceptive statistic (every campaign should have one) is that twelve "kids" are killed every day by gunfire (to reach that number, you have to include tots of 19). At the rally itself, the imagery was child-centered. There was a stroller march down the Mall and a sing-along with Raffi. Up on the stage, it was W. C. Fields's hell: kids making speeches, kids singing songs, and even kids lining up to ring a sort of reverse Liberty Bell (it was made from melted-down guns). For those who had not already had enough of little children, the viewing screens would occasionally show footage of yet more.

The only people able to speak for all these youngsters, it was argued, are mothers. They have to be the right sort of mothers, of course. Pistol-packing mamas need not apply. Dads, of course, didn't rate a mention.

For the Moms, this is seductive stuff. It tells them that they are a uniquely moral force, that they are important, custodians of the future or something like that. No wonder they are lapping it up. The implications for the rest of us are not so great. The underlying message of the march was that society has to be run, first and foremost, in the interests of its children as determined by (approved) moms. And whatever else that means, it means more gun control. To those who ask why, writer Anna Quindlen had one, revealing answer: "because I said so." The crowd went wild—laughing, cheering, and repeating the phrase. They forgot one thing. The American people are not all children.

Or are they? **NR**

■ KOSOVO ■

Rewriting the Last War

What new Pentagon Papers reveal

ANDREW J. BACEVICH

THE war for Kosovo—famous as the first war in which the victors suffered not a single soldier killed in action—has claimed a late casualty: truth. The wound is one that the American military has inflicted on itself, but that does not make it any less serious. Left to fester, it may prove fatal.

When the war began in the spring of '99, Gen. Wesley Clark, the NATO military commander, vowed, "We're going to systematically and progressively attack, disrupt, degrade, devastate, and ultimately . . . destroy" the military forces of Slobodan Milosevic. Seventy-eight days and 38,000 combat sorties later, senior officials in the Defense Department claimed that Operation Allied Force—predominantly a U.S. operation, despite the name—had done just that. Secretary William Cohen declared that air power had "severely crippled" Serb forces in Kosovo, "destroying more than 50 percent of the artillery and one-third of the armored vehicles." Gen. Henry Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, chimed in with specifics. NATO air strikes had knocked out some 120 tanks, 220 other armored vehicles, and 450 mortars and artillery pieces. Allied Force was a textbook illustration of what the marriage of advanced technology and skilled airmen could accomplish, a precision war demonstrating once again the extraordinary U.S. ability to pick apart an enemy army virtually at will.

At war's end, the Yugoslav army's orderly and disciplined withdrawal from Kosovo cast some doubt on those claims; newspaper photos of clean-shaven, crisply dressed Serb tank crews lounging on undamaged vehicles did not suggest a beaten enemy. But such doubts tended to come from critics who, from the outset, had viewed the war as misguided. The Pentagon was therefore quick to reject this skepticism as tainted by bias.

Now it turns out that the skeptics were right, their suspicions confirmed by the military's own postwar analysis of the bombing campaign. As reported in the May 15 issue of *Newsweek*, that assessment, undertaken at Clark's behest and directed by a senior U.S. Air Force officer, determined that NATO investigators could confirm barely a dozen Yugoslav tanks destroyed, along with only 18 other armored vehicles and 20 artillery pieces. Investigators who walked the battlefield found that many of the "weapons" reported destroyed were instead crude decoys. In other words, Cohen and Shelton had overstated the effectiveness of attacks against Serb forces in the field by roughly a factor of ten.

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The skeptics were right, their suspicions confirmed by the military's own postwar analysis of the campaign.

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Worse, confronted with conclusions at variance with the Clinton administration's approved narrative, senior defense officials decided to suppress their own report. Clark quietly commissioned a new study, this one employing more liberal evaluation criteria. What pilots *thought* they saw now counted as much as what investigators had found on the ground. Not surprisingly, this second study produced conclusions more closely in line with original claims for the air campaign's success and promptly earned the Pentagon's stamp of approval. All was well—until the original report was leaked.

Does it matter that the press caught the Pentagon trying to ditch a realistic look at an American war? Inured to a political culture in which misstatements, misinformation, and bald-faced lies have become as routine as kissing babies, Americans will treat this as a

Mr. Bacevich is a professor of international relations at Boston University.

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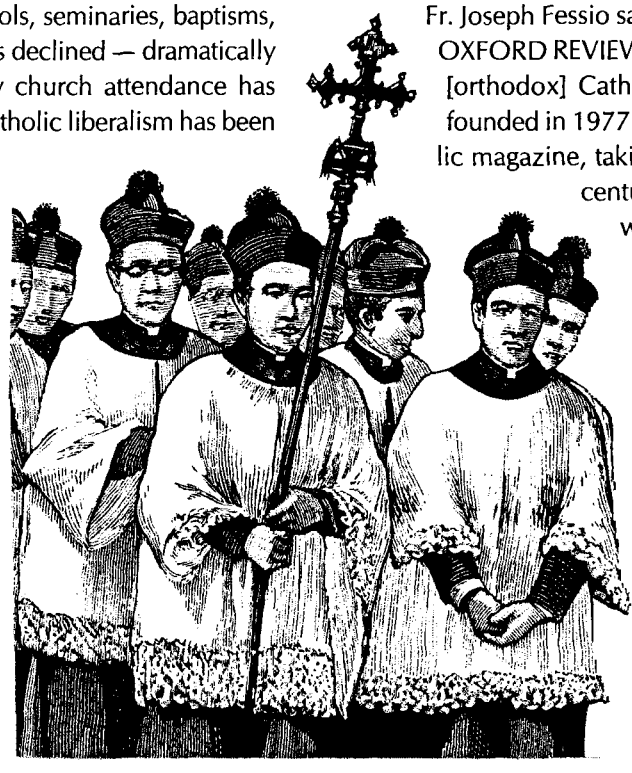
Traditional Catholicism Is Back

Since the 1960s, Catholicism in America has experimented with religious liberalism, and the results are in: Two out of three Catholics don't believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The number of priests, brothers, sisters, Catholic schools, seminaries, baptisms, marriages, and conversions has declined — dramatically in certain cases. And weekly church attendance has dropped from 70% to 25%. Catholic liberalism has been a monumental flop. Of course Father Flapdoodle, Sister Snakebite, and Bishop Bubbles haven't figured that out — they think the 60s never ended. Still trying to be cool cats, they're so *cool* they're frozen in a time warp.



But, mercifully, God's frozen people are thawing out. Where's the fire and dynamism in the Church today? Among traditional Catholics! The dioceses that have no vocations shortage, the religious orders that are growing, and the seminaries that are packed are predominantly the traditional ones. And traditional Catholics have been founding *new* colleges and seminaries. Polls show that the Catholics most committed to the Church are traditional Catholics. Seminarians and younger priests are much more traditional than middle-aged and older priests. The only novel idea in Catholic education is home-schooling, spearheaded by traditional Catholics. The only massive grassroots movement in the Church is the prolife movement, led by traditional Catholics. The only significant Catholic presence on TV is the ardently traditional EWTN. The only significant Catholic voice on radio is that of traditional Catholics.

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one-day story—if that. Prevarication in the corridors of power barely qualifies as newsworthy. But to place this incident on a par with, say, Al Gore's creative autobiography is to underestimate its significance. There remain some few areas of public life where integrity still matters. National security is—or should be—one of them.

For too many years now, Americans have taken U.S. military superiority for granted. They have become oblivious to the true source of that prowess, which is not gee-whiz technology or a big defense budget. No, to a very large extent, the superiority of American arms has derived from an officer corps imbued with a superior brand of military professionalism. That sense of professionalism grew directly out of Vietnam—a war in which the willingness of senior military leaders to fudge the truth had led to catastrophe. Central to the revitalized professionalism that emerged from Vietnam was an ethic that revered integrity, insisted on realism in the study of war, and refused to blink at uncomfortable facts.

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To refuse to see Kosovo for what it was invites political leaders to engage in further flights of martial fancy.

■

What *Newsweek* calls the "Kosovo cover-up" points toward an officer corps that is losing touch with these values. Nor is this an isolated instance. An accumulation of evidence suggests a military establishment in which things that could once be counted on are coming unglued. Service chiefs who mask readiness problems and declare their absolute fealty to gender-integrated basic training invite the charge that they are more interested in political accommodation than in combat readiness. Their own subordinates are the first ones to figure out the real score. A damning survey of junior army officers—conducted recently by the Army itself to find out why so many are leaving—reveals widespread cynicism about the integrity and professionalism of ranking military leaders. As one officer commented, "Senior leaders will throw subordinates under the bus in a heartbeat to protect or advance their careers." The phony analysis of Allied Force is of a piece with these developments.

As in the case of Vietnam, the implications of declining professionalism are profound. To refuse to see Kosovo for what it was is to draw the wrong lessons from that conflict. This refusal perpetuates illusions that air power will permit the United States to accomplish its purposes by waging sanitized war—without costs, without sacrifice. It invites political leaders to engage in further flights of martial fancy. Quite simply, it courts disaster.

The architect of the Kosovo air campaign, Lt. Gen. Michael Short, has for months now been complaining publicly about the political constraints that inhibited his conduct of operations. "What we are left with now is a generation of politicians," Short said recently, "who have an unrealistic picture of air power and air war. It is a video game on CNN. All your nation has to do is send four airplanes and sixty people a thousand miles, turn them over to an American commander, and go about your business." Short's contempt for those who do not understand the reality of war is palpable.

But if politicians entertain this false picture—and Short is surely correct that many do—it is the military itself that bears much responsibility. In the case of Kosovo, senior military officers have foisted onto the gullible a caricature of war. And when the facts began to expose their fraud, they manipulated the facts to suit their purposes.

Touted by the Clinton administration and its acolytes as historic, the war for Kosovo may yet live up to its billing. But historians will not remember Kosovo as the first conflict decided by air power alone—it becomes increasingly clear that NATO's bombardment was only one factor among several that led Milosevic to withdraw from Kosovo. Nor will historians cite Kosovo as a precedent-setting demonstration of a new, muscular alliance shouldering "out of area" responsibilities—if anything, Allied Force curbed appetites within NATO for further undertakings. Instead, Americans are more likely to remember Kosovo and its aftermath as the moment when the U.S. military began to fall apart. **NR**

■ **EUROPE** ■

'By Winding Stair'

Missile defense and its antagonists

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

ALTHOUGH at a glacial speed, and obstructed at every stage by the Clinton administration, America is moving steadily toward the deployment of a national system of missile defense. Public opinion has always been in favor of a commonsense protection against missile attacks from rogue states or accidental launches. Most Americans believe, indeed, that they already enjoy such a defense and are shocked when pollsters inform them otherwise. It was the politicians who needed convincing.

A growing sense of U.S. vulnerability led Congress to pass legislation in May 1999 mandating the deployment of a limited national missile-defense system as soon as technically possible. President Clinton signed the legislation, though he continues to drag his feet, insisting that a final decision to deploy will not be made until later this year on the basis of interceptor tests. Given that 2000 is an election year, however, and that there is growing bipartisan support for a decision to deploy, it looks a foregone conclusion.

If this progress is a reminder of Bacon's dictum that "all rising to a great place is by winding stair," it is at least spiraling in the right direction. But among America's NATO allies, a very different mood prevails. Europe as a whole has not fundamentally rethought its view of missile defense since the morning after Ronald Reagan's "Star Wars" speech, when it collectively decided that such schemes were technically impractical, strategically destabilizing, and a threat to arms control. To these earlier criticisms it now adds the

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Arabian Fables (I)

How the Arabs soften up world opinion with fanciful myths.

Josef Goebbels, the infamous propaganda minister of the Nazis, had it right. Just tell people big lies often enough and they will believe them. The Arabs have learned that lesson well. They have swayed world opinion by endlessly repeating myths and lies that have no basis in fact.

What are some of these myths?

The "Palestinians". That is the fundamental myth. The concept of "Palestinians" is one that did not exist until about 1948, when the Arab inhabitants, of what until then was Palestine, wished to differentiate themselves from the Jews. Until then, the Jews were the Palestinians. There was the Palestinian Brigade of Jewish volunteers in the British World War II Army (at a time when the Palestinian Arabs were in Berlin hatching plans with Adolf Hitler for world conquest and how to kill all the Jews); there was the Palestinian Symphony Orchestra (all Jews, of course); there was *The Palestine Post*; and so much more.

The Arabs who now call themselves "Palestinians" do so in order to persuade a misinformed world that they are a distinct nationality and that "Palestine" is their ancestral homeland. But they are no distinct nationality at all. They are the same — in language, custom, and tribal and family ties — as the Arabs of Syria, Jordan, and beyond. There is no more difference between the "Palestinians" and the other Arabs of those countries than there is between, say, the citizens of Minnesota and those of Wisconsin.

What's more, many of the "Palestinians", or their immediate ancestors, came to the area attracted by the prosperity created by the Jews, in what previously had been pretty much of a wasteland.

The nationhood of the "Palestinians" is a myth.

The "West Bank". Again, this is a concept that did not exist until 1948, when the army of the Kingdom of Transjordan, together with five other Arab armies, invaded the Jewish state of Israel, on the very day of its creation.

In what can almost be described as a Biblical miracle, the ragtag Jewish forces defeated the combined Arab might. But Transjordan stayed in possession of Judea and Samaria and the eastern part of Jerusalem. The Jordanians expelled all the Jews from the area that they occupied, destroyed all Jewish houses of worship, and renamed as "West Bank" the territories that had been Judea and Samaria since time immemorial.

The attempt, quite successful, was to persuade an uninformed world that these territories were ancestral parts of the Jordanian Arab Kingdom (itself a very recent creation of British power diplomacy).

> "The web of lies and myths that the Arab propaganda machine has created plays an important role in the unrelenting quest to destroy the State of Israel. What a shame that the world has accepted most of it!"

Even after the total rout of the Arabs in the 1967 Six-Day War, in which the Jordanians were driven out of Judea/Samaria and of Jerusalem, they and the world continued to call this territory the "West Bank", a geographical and political concept that cannot be found on any except the most recent maps.

The concept of the "West Bank" is a myth.

The "Occupied Territories". After the victorious Six-Day War, during which the Israeli army defeated the same cabal of Arabs that had invaded the country in 1948, Israel regained possession of Judea/Samaria, which the Jordanians had illegally occupied for 19 years; of the Gaza Strip, which had been occupied by the Egyptians, but which had never been part of their country; and of the Golan Heights, a plateau the size of Queens, which, though originally part of Palestine, had been assigned to Syria by British-French agreement.

The last sovereign in Judea/Samaria and in Gaza was the British mandatory power — and before it was the Ottoman Empire. All of Palestine, including what is now the Kingdom of Jordan, was, by the Balfour Declaration, destined to be the Jewish National Home. How then could the Israelis possibly be "occupiers" in their own territory? Who would be the sovereign and who the rightful inhabitants?

The concept of "occupied territories" in reference to Judea/Samaria and Gaza is an Arab propaganda myth.

Unable so far to destroy Israel on the battlefield — though they are feverishly preparing for their next assault — the Arabs are now trying to overcome and destroy Israel by their acknowledged "policy of stages". That policy is to get as much land as possible carved out of Israel "by peaceful and diplomatic" means, so as to make Israel indefensible and softened up for the final assault. The web of lies and myths that the Arab propaganda machine has created plays an important role in the unrelenting quest to destroy the State of Israel. What a shame that the world has accepted most of it!

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post–Cold War complaint that an American decision to build missile defenses would alienate the Russians. Thus, Europeans on the NATO conference circuit regularly snipe at the proposed U.S. missile defense.

What is curious about this frozen attitude is not so much that it neglects the new risks from rogue states as that it ignores the fact that they especially threaten Europe. As seasoned defense expert William Schneider Jr. points out: "Current developments will enable proliferators in the Middle East and Asia to place all of Europe within range of ballistic missiles [possibly armed with mass-destruction warheads] within five years." And this threat is growing—with 36 nations possessing ballistic missiles, 17 nations thought to have chemical- and/or biological-warfare programs, 8 nations certainly owning nuclear weapons, and 4 nations believed to be "of nuclear-proliferation concern." Unfortunately for Europe, three of these last four are Iran, Iraq, and Libya, all on the periphery of the continent.

When such inconvenient facts are pointed out—and they seldom are—Europeans take refuge in the argument that deterrence will protect them against minor rogue states even more securely than it did against the mighty Soviet Union. Now, deterrence may well work for the major powers like Russia and China, which have relatively stable political establishments and a great deal to lose—though it has to fail only once for disaster to occur. But there are a number of reasons for doubting this assurance in other regards. In the first place, deterrence cannot protect against accidental launches, the danger of which increases with proliferation among states that currently operate unsafe airlines. Nor can it protect against a missile launched by a terrorist group with no return address. Nor can it provide a cast-iron defense against the miscalculation of a megalomaniac warlord.

And there is a more subtle danger. Will European nations be prepared to intervene to prevent the spread of Third World conflicts if their intervention provokes threats to retaliate with ballistic missiles? This danger is discussed in "Coming into Range," a report by the all-party Missile Proliferation Study Group in London. As it points out, Britain's defense planners have rightly been praised for their proposed creation of a Joint Rapid Reaction Force, built around two new aircraft carriers. The JRRF is intended to enable Britain to intervene swiftly and in force around the globe, and it is doubtless especially welcome to the Pentagon and the State Department as both potential military assistance and political cover. But the absence of a missile-defense system covering Britain may render the force largely useless. "The reality," says the study group's report, "is that in the absence of protection the crisis might literally come to us as the result of dispatching our forces to the crisis and, that being so, no decision to deploy those forces could be made." And if that is true for Britain, which, like France, still retains a culture of military patriotism, how much more likely it is that largely debellicized nations like Germany and Belgium will shrink from military actions that entail such heavy risks. If Saddam Hussein had had long-range ballistic missiles capable of hitting Berlin, Paris, and London in 1990, how many European nations would have taken part in the Gulf War?

If no Western power deploys missile defense, within a short time every NATO member will be a potential target of nuclear, chemical, or biological attack.

The implications of this for Europe are very serious. If no Western power deploys missile defense, which is what the Europeans now seem to want, then within a short time every NATO member will be a potential target of nuclear, chemical, or biological attack. Yet if only the U.S. has such a system, that might lead to rogue states' threatening to strike at European targets in retaliation for purely American military interventions. In either event, Europeans would be hostages—and the present system of international relations that rests ultimately on the West's willingness to use force would gradually unravel. The logical solution would seem to be an American-led worldwide system of missile defense organized and deployed, at least in part, through NATO.

Why do the Europeans not agitate for this? In part, no doubt, the explanation is intellectual inflexibility. They have been assuring the Americans for so long now that "Star Wars" is a pipe dream that they cannot easily bring themselves to see that it has become a strategic necessity. And since one thread of French foreign policy in recent years has been to restrain what it sees as the overwhelming "hyper-power" of the U.S., Paris instinctively opposes anything that buttresses it. The unspoken objection to a missile-defense system is that *it would work*.

The Europeans' spoken, or admitted, objections are another matter. One is that the continent's governments, especially the Germans, have made arms control an unquestionable desideratum of foreign policy. They are accordingly very reluctant to endorse a policy that requires the rewriting or abandonment of the ABM treaty. It would ease their consciences if the Russians could be induced to go along with any such renegotiation. But the Clinton administration called off negotiations with Moscow on missile-defense cooperation in its first term, and at present it seems to see Mr. Putin as its ally against Congress on the issue. Both the Russians and (therefore) the Germans can probably be won over by a sufficiently determined president and a few sweeteners. But that probably requires a new man in the White House.

The other big problem is the nexus of money and the European Security and Defense Policy. The ESDP is a non-solution to a non-existent problem. It has no military value, but has the potential to divide the NATO alliance. In their zeal for Euro-integration, the Europeans have committed themselves to it, and the Americans, not wishing to confirm the French stereotype of a hegemonic Uncle Sam, have grudgingly gone along. Useless though it is, the ESDP will cost money at a time when the Europeans have very little to spare—indeed, the budgetary rules of

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the Maastricht treaty actually prevent their increasing defense expenditure. So there is great reluctance to consider any other program, in particular anything as costly as a NATO missile defense, even though, unlike the ESDP, it would actually provide Europe with more defense.

Of course, there are hopeful signs. Realization of their vulnerability is finally beginning to dawn on the British—notably on defense secretary Geoff Hoon. Because the U.S. wants to use British facilities such as the Fylingdales Early Warning Station in its own system, London sees the prospect of Anglo-American cooperation in return for military contracts and a share of the anti-missile umbrella. And much would change in NATO, as it did in 1981, if the next president proved to be a determined advocate of missile defense. After all, the Europeans have not been the only skeptics. Missile defense has had to contend with a hostile White House since 1993. **NR**

■ EDUCATION ■

The Hardest 'R'

A dispatch from the math wars

JOHN DERBYSHIRE

HERE is a math teacher's joke from around 1975, when the original "new math" movement was in full flood.

> A school inspector is walking round an elementary-school math classroom observing the children engaged in various tasks. One little girl is carefully placing square blocks in a tray to make an array four blocks by six. When she has finished, the inspector says: "Nice job! Now, can you tell me—what is four times six?" The child raises her eyes to the ceiling, furrows her brow, and chants: "One six is six, two sixes are twelve, three sixes are eighteen, four sixes are twenty-four. So it's twenty-four." The inspector, somewhat disconcerted, says: "Well, that *is* the right answer. But why were you stacking those blocks in that tray?" Child: "Because the teacher told me to."

New math is now a very old story, the opening campaign in a drawn-out war between theory and reality, in which the advantage has tipped sometimes this way, sometimes that. In April this year the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics issued its *Principles and Standards for School Mathematics*. This document has been widely perceived as a retreat on the part of the NCTM, a shifting of the balance back toward reality—"a gesture to the critics," according to the *New York Times*. For example, it

Mr. Derbyshire is a contributing editor of NATIONAL REVIEW.

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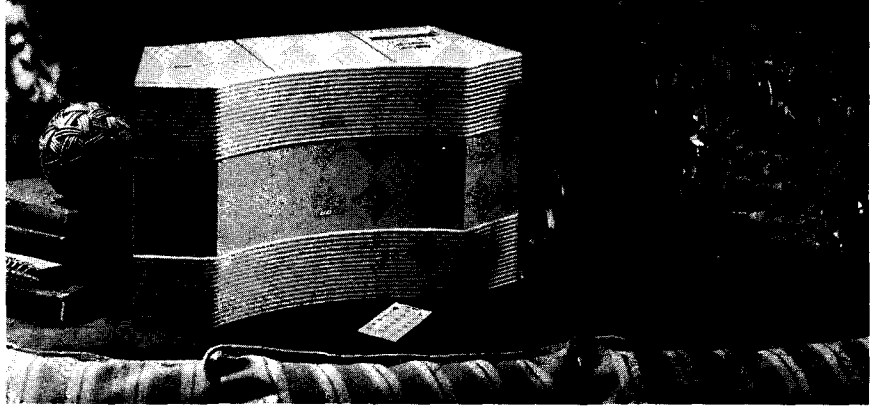

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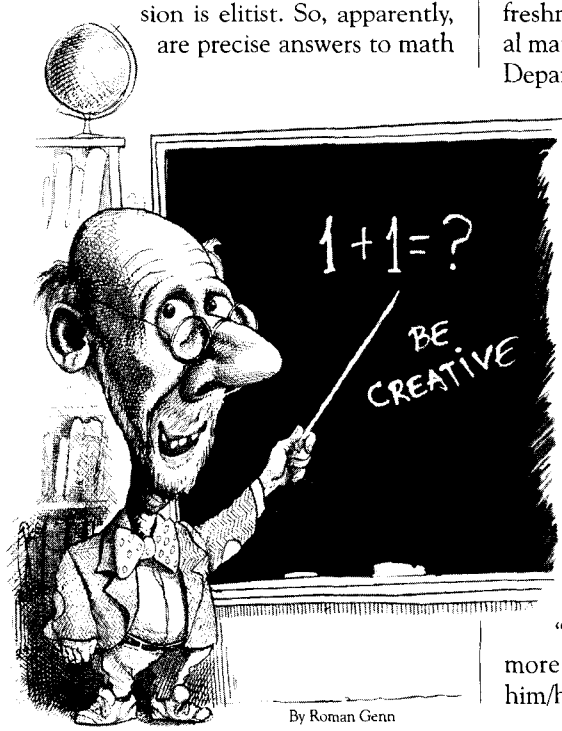
reinstates such practices as the rote learning of multiplication tables, so that children educated under these new standards will have the same fallback option as the little girl in the 1975 story.

That option has not been available to math students for several years. The previous standard for math teaching, also promulgated by the NCTM, was the so-called constructivist approach, defined in a 1989 report and subsequently adopted by most states. The central idea behind constructivism was that students should not merely know the correct answer to a problem, but should understand *why* it is correct. As reasonable as this sounds, it amounted in practice to a campaign of obloquy against rote learning and even more against "computational algorithms" like long division and the rules for manipulating fractions. With that flair for overstatement so characteristic of the revolutionary Left, the teaching of these algorithms to high-school students was declared by Steven Leinwand, a leading proponent of the 1989 standards, and a board member of the National Science Foundation's math program, to be "not only unnecessary, but counterproductive and downright dangerous." *Dangerous?* What, then, was the nature of the danger? Such instruction, wrote Mr. Leinwand in 1994, sorts people out, "anointing the few" who master these procedures and "casting out the many." In other words, long division is elitist. So, apparently, are precise answers to math problems; under the 1989 standards you could get full marks for *estimating* an answer, instead of having to compute it precisely. You better hope that bridge you are driving over wasn't designed by an engineer trained in "constructivist" math.



By Roman Genn

Constructivism was itself an attempt to impose some order on the chaotic state of math teaching in the 1980s. There was the deceptively named "basic skills" math: Use your calculator to find out 4 times 6. Then there was "rainforest math": 4 loggers each cut down 6 trees—how did the birds and squirrels feel? To capture the enthusiasm of black children there was "African Math," which proceeded mainly from the fiction that the ancient Egyptians were black Africans, and tried to teach arithmetic via their very clumsy and half-baked system of notation. The 1989 standards at least promised stability. But when parents discovered that their children were no longer being taught to multiply two-digit numbers, there was a peasant uprising. California was one of the first states to adopt the 1989 standards in its schools (in 1992), and it was in California that parental opposition first made itself heard, leading to the California Math Wars of the mid 1990s. This counterrevolution soon spread, becoming a national movement and enlisting college teachers disturbed at finding that ever-larger numbers of their freshman intake were in need of remedial math classes. When, last October, the Department of Education endorsed ten constructivist math programs as "exemplary" and "promising," it was promptly refuted by an open letter from 200 university mathematicians and scholars, who argued that the programs concerned would leave students unprepared for college work.

The difference between math education now and 40 years ago is not merely one of changed pedagogic technique. For the kind of person who is good enough at math to teach it, the job market of today is an Aladdin's cave of opportunities. Venture capitalist Jim Woodhill has remarked: "Whenever I meet a teacher with more than 1300 SAT points, I drag him/her off to one of my high-tech start-ups." So who remains in the classroom? A recent article by a career high-school teacher in the London *Spectator* set out the eight types of people to be found on a typical high-school teachers' roster (in general—not specifically math teachers). To abbreviate drastically, they are:

1. Evangelist: wants to shape youth.
2. Exhibitionist: classroom as theater.
3. Bureaucrat: teaching as gateway to a career in administration.
4. Scholar: loves his subject but can't get a research post.
5. Jock: poor man's way of being a sports pro.
6. Fascist: loves power and discipline.
7. Pedophile: loves kids . . . the wrong way.
8. Cynic: short hours, long vacations, powerful union—hey.

(The writer says that category 8 is "by far the largest" in England.) Some readers may think this analysis itself too cynical. Certainly there are gifted teachers—"evangelists" and "scholars"—who can work wonders. But how many are there? And what teaching methods are suitable for non-gifted teachers—surely the great majority?

Lurking beneath all of these considerations is the fundamental, perhaps intractable problem of math education: Math is *hard*. Probably no large number of people will ever be much good at it, or like it much. Mathematical thinking is, in a sense, deeply unnatural. Mathematical truths are revealed to the human race very, very slowly, after unimaginable intellectual effort and lifetimes of frustration, against all the grain of ordinary human thought and language processes. In the preface to *Principia Mathematica* Bertrand Russell noted that an everyday object like a whale is immensely more complex, on any scale of complexity that makes sense, than a number like "five"; yet the whale is much easier for the mind to name, encompass, and manipulate than the number. Any group of humans that was in regular contact with whales would certainly have a word for them; yet there are plausibly said to be primitive peoples that have no word for any number larger than three, though five-ness is right there, literally, at their fingertips. Given this profoundly unnatural quality of

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mathematics, it is a wonder we get any of it into children's heads at all. At the Academy of Lagado in *Gulliver's Travels*, mathematics was taught by writing the propositions on thin wafers which the students then swallowed. So far as I know, this method has not yet been recommended by any of the myriad councils, boards, and committees pronouncing on math education. Perhaps it's time to give it a try. **NR**

■ THE WORLD ■

The Specter of McDonald's

An object of bottomless hatred

JONAH GOLDBERG

If you're bored—I mean really bored—you might fish out an old copy of *The Communist Manifesto* and try replacing the word "Communism" with "McDonald's." "A specter is haunting Europe—the specter of McDonald's. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this specter." This McDonald's Manifesto would at least be more readable than most of the dreck composed by the vast and powerful forces arrayed against the fast-food chain.

In fact, if you're anti-WTO, anti-America, anti-capitalism, anti-globalism, anti-biotech—pretty much anti-anything—it's likely that you view Ronald McDonald as your sworn enemy and that your most persuasive public arguments involve taking a bad word and putting a "Mc" in front of it. Signs denouncing "McGreed," "McPollution," and corporate "McDomination" are staples of left-wing protests everywhere. And, of course, here at home we're all accustomed to the complaints of welfare-state warriors who denounce so-called "McJobs," presumably because they think "job" is a bad word too.

Mr. Goldberg is editor of National Review Online (www.nationalreview.com).

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It's more than name-calling. In the last year, franchises in Switzerland, England, Belgium, China, the United States, and—surprise!—France have faced protests, boycotts, ransackings, and even bombings. In the last five years, more than 50 countries have hosted such assaults on the Golden Arches.

An international coalition of Greek Communists, animal rightsers, farmers, unions, affluent anarchists, left-wing intellectuals, right-wing nationalists, Luddites, Chinese Communists, radical Pakistani Muslims, parochial separatists, and malcontents of a thousand other varieties have all declared one restaurant chain to be the locus of evil in the modern world. And yet that same chain is so popular it manages to open a new store somewhere in the world every 17 hours. Clearly, there is a conflict of visions here.

To be sure, a big part of it is that "anti-McDonald's" equals "anti-American" in many places, and America's unquestioned dominance puts a bee under some people's berets. This is especially the case in France, where McDonald's is the only thing short of pedophilia or boxed wine that is safe for everyone to hate. Indeed, if this weren't France, the extent of anti-Americanism there would be very disturbing. An anti-U.S. activist and author named José Bové is a French folk hero because he led a goon squad of angry farmers in dismantling a local McDonald's with crowbars. An angry judge gave Bové a whopping 20 days in jail. Politicians bravely denounce the company. Jacques Chirac, the French president, recently declared, "I am in complete solidarity with France's farm-workers, and I detest McDonald's food."

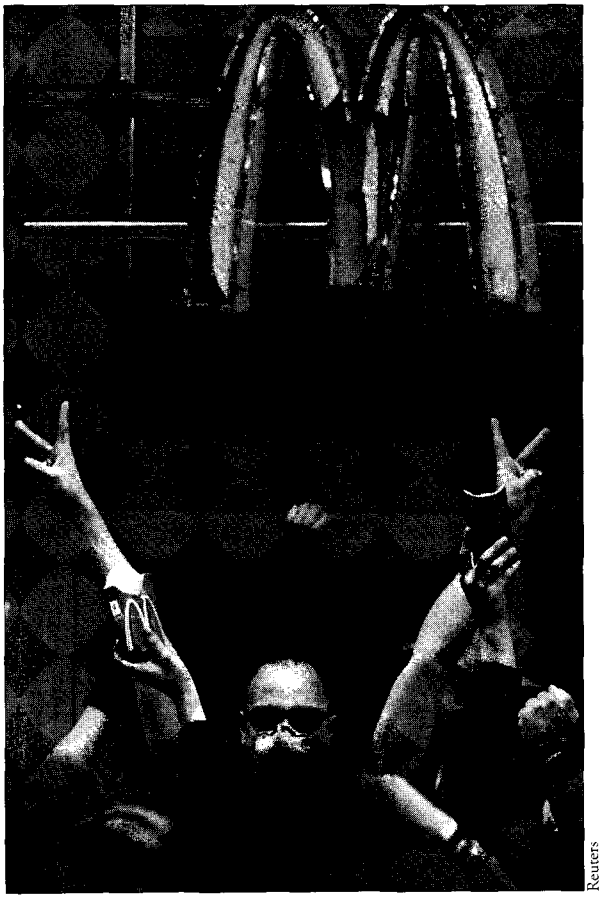
But anti-Americanism only partly accounts for the phenomenon. For example, protesters will often attack a Mickey D's even if the U.S. embassy is more convenient. When Breton separatists wanted to send a signal to Paris last month, they blew up a McDonald's, killing a 28-year-old breakfast-shift leader. (It was a mixed signal, to be sure, because McDonald's is even less popular in Paris than in Brittany.)

McDonald's-ism represents more than Americanism: The company long ago surpassed Coca-Cola and Nike as the true force of globalization. Political scientists constantly use McDonald's as a metaphor; *The Economist*, the worldwide tip sheet on global prosperity, uses a "Big Mac Index" to measure disparities in purchasing power around the globe; environmentalists spin conspiracy theories about the company's plot to create a "McWorld"; and anarchists just want to open a fresh can of whupass on the Hamburglar. Tom Friedman of the *New York Times* formulated his "Golden Arches Theory of Conflict Prevention": No two nations with a McDonald's ever went to war with each other. (This was true for millennia, until the U.S.-led air war with Yugoslavia. Another first for Bill Clinton.)

McDonald's sprouts up naturally wherever there is enough economic oxygen to sustain it.

But what does McDonald's-ism stand for, really? Well—to borrow a phrase from Burger King—it stands for "having it your way." McDonald's is perceived by its enemies as a plague-carrier, imposing the pestilence of Western consumer culture and low standards on every hamlet. The reality is exactly the opposite: McDonald's sprouts up naturally wherever there is enough economic oxygen to sustain it.

As historian David Halberstam points out in *The Fifties*, McDonald's was a natural product of postwar American prosperity. Young families flocking to the suburbs—often with both parents working—wanted a fast, clean place where they could feed the kids affordable, high-quality meals, on the parents' own schedule. Anyone who has needed a quick coffee and one-handed meal, on the way to a 9 A.M. business meeting or parent-teacher conference, understands the vital role McDonald's plays for the typical worker. Indeed, for all the silliness about the company's exploiting women, the chain was an unsung hero in women's liberation—allowing overworked women an opportunity for a convenient meal. One of the company's first slogans was "Give mom a night off." This eventually became "You deserve a break today."



Reuters

Ransacking a London McDonald's

That model hasn't changed. In the current issue of *Foreign Affairs*, Harvard China scholar James L. Watson makes a persuasive case that the success of McDonald's in China is dependent on similar economic changes: "As in other parts of East Asia, the startup date for McDonald's corresponds to the emergence of a new class of consumers with money to spend on family entertainment."

When Golden Arches go up, it's not the hoisting of an American flag, but rather a sign that a country is raising its own standards. McDonald's is the canary in the coal mine of economic success. Despite the fact that French farmers are the company's chief antagonists, France's 800 McDonald's buy 80 percent of their ingredients in France, sustaining 45,000 French

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beef producers. The same pattern obtains throughout most of the world.

In his essay, Watson argues that McDonald's is a barometer and accelerator of bourgeoisification in China. He points out that for all the complaints against the company's "cheap" standards, it maintains more reliably sanitary conditions than most indigenous Chinese eateries. Indeed, this points to the educational value of McDonald's. Watson reports that the fetish McDonald's makes of cleaning bathrooms has only had a salutary effect in the rest of China. Another social benefit was evident at the opening of the McDonald's in Hong Kong: Customers, in traditional style, swarmed the counter, screaming and thrusting their money toward the cashier. McDonald's appointed a young female "queue monitor" to coax the mob into a line. Watson credits McDonald's for the fact that middle- and upper-class customers in Hong Kong, and increasingly throughout China, have come to accept a wait-your-turn system instead of mobs. This may sadden traditionalists, but nostalgia for mobs is not a strong argument.

The most relentless criticism against McDonald's is that it is a profit-hungry multinational offering nothing but minimum-wage, dead-end jobs. Don't believe the hype. First, the "greedy" charge is an entertaining one, considering that the company's success is famously tied to its low profit margins. If profit equals greed, McDonald's is not an offender. Besides, low prices are surely a good thing for the world's poor.

Second, while there's nothing wrong with paying the minimum wage, the truth is that McDonald's is paying considerably higher than the minimum wage in most regions, and many franchises are now offering health and dental benefits. The average manager in a company-owned McDonald's starts in the mid 30s. As for dead-end jobs, with one-eighth of the American work force having worked for a McDonald's at some point, the company has rightly been called America's best job-training program. Young people are taught cleanliness, punctuality, and basic business skills. Over half of the company's middle and senior management started as hourly workers.

Yes, McDonald's does things to anger environmentalists, but who doesn't? Their real problem is with development of any kind, and by beating up on Mickey D's they blame one kind of flower instead of the fertile garden that produces it.

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Anti-McDonald's fervor is less an instance of anti-Americanism than a form of elitist nostalgia.

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At its core, anti-McDonald's fervor is less an instance of anti-Americanism or anti-globalism than a form of elitist nostalgia. Bové, the French activist, understands this. He says, "McDonald's is a symbol of industrial food production. Whether such products are American or French, the effect is the same: the destruction of traditional farming, different cultures and ways of life." He's confused, but he's honest. As Watson points out, if you wanted to try real industrial and unsafe food, you should have visited China before it got McDonald's. Today, Watson says, China offers vastly better high- and low-end eating than it did even ten years ago. When people want to get rid of McDonald's, they want to turn back the clock.

When I lived briefly in Prague, I saw this phenomenon first hand. The expats there were livid that a McDonald's was coming to town. They very much wanted Prague to maintain its sealed-in-amber charm, complete with authentic lousy food. But I remember a Czech friend's outrage at the idea that McDonald's should be kept out. "You try living without hot, cheap, safe food when you want it, *for forty years*. It's easy for them to say. We don't want to be Prague-Land for young Americans. We want to be a real country."

A real country, like America—where there is one McDonald's franchise for every 30,000 people (the exact ratio the Founders intended for congressional representation). Around the world, the company has more than 25,000 outlets in 119 countries. Clearly McDonald's is giving people something they want. And, one last thing in their defense: Big Macs taste really good. **NR**

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■ COVER STORY ■

Taking on the Biggest

It's Social Security's turn, at last

RAMESH PONNURU

GEORGE W. BUSH'S promise to nudge Social Security in a free-market direction will be the most important policy issue in this year's election. More than any other issue, it will determine who wins the White House. And that's just for starters. Bush's proposal has the potential to alter the course of American politics for decades to come.

How could it be otherwise? Social Security is the federal government's largest program. Receiving a check from the program is the principal interaction 40 million Americans have with the federal government. For millions more, the mailing of those checks is one of the few things the federal government does that make them view it positively. It is, symbolically, what's left of the New Deal. Agriculture subsidies and welfare were drastically overhauled in 1996, and only a small part of the country cares about the Tennessee Valley Authority.

AP/Wide World Photos

What Bush is saying is that this relic is no longer sacrosanct. All of the other institutions that were suitable to mid-century America have had to adapt to today's more individualistic, decentralizing culture: the phone companies, the media, the academy, the churches, even the military. Bureaucracy is in retreat almost everywhere, and Social Security is no exception.

That's not the way it looked when the program was born, of course. Social Security was a response not only to the economic crisis of the 1930s, but to an economic order that threatened cherished American values. After decades of industrialization, the fiction that we were a country of self-reliant yeoman farmers could no longer be sustained. Labor and capital had become two distinct classes. Most Americans worked for others, their livelihoods dependent on vast impersonal forces they could not control or even understand.

Political scientist Charles Kesler summarizes the argument that prevailed in the '30s: "Given the insecurity built into the modern economy, government had to provide social security to save the middle-class basis of American democracy. Since people could no longer independently save for their old age, the government had to help them to do this in order to lift them to freedom." By framing the issue this way, FDR was able to sell government pensions—a policy idea imported from Europe's emergent social democracies—as an outgrowth of our best political traditions. FDR also had to resort to some deception, presenting a mild program of redistribution as though it were a form of insurance (a deception that continues to this day in Democratic criticisms of Bush).

It was through expedients such as these that FDR got credit from historians for "saving capitalism" by tempering its excesses. Class conflict between capital and labor remained a muted theme of American politics, but it never became virulent. At the same time, dependence on the state increased. The inventor of government pensions, Chancellor Bismarck, explicitly sought this effect: "Whoever has a pension for his old age is . . . far easier to handle," he said, having become the equivalent of "a servant in the chancellery or at court." In America's more democratic circumstances, the chief political effect of Social Security was to increase popular support for the party of government.

There was, however, an alternative method of solving the labor–capital problem that had attracted interest from thoughtful businessmen from the dawn of the industrial revolution: making the laborer an owner of capital himself. Albert Gallatin, Jefferson's treasury secretary, implemented the first profit-sharing plan ever at his glass works in New Geneva, Pa., arguing that the "democratic principle upon which this Nation was founded . . . should be applied to the industrial process." The president of Sears, Roebuck and Co. testified to the Senate in 1939 that profit sharing "helps to avoid labor unrest and strikes, and gives the employee a feeling of greater security and unity of interest with the employer."

The profit-sharing strategy failed because its efficacy depended too much on the success of particular companies. Over the past two decades, however, worker capitalism has taken off as employees have gained access to capital markets generally, through mutual funds and "defined contribution" corporate pension plans. (In a defined-contribution plan,

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workers have a large say in the management of their accounts. In "defined benefit" plans, which used to be the norm, employers managed the accounts and promised workers a benefit based on their wage and length of service to the company.) While fewer than a fifth of American households owned stock 20 years ago, today slightly more than half do, either directly or through their pension plans.

In "The Rise of Worker Capitalism," a paper for the Cato Institute, Richard Nadler has surveyed the research on how this stockholding revolution has affected workers' attitudes. He finds that it has made them more interested in saving for the future, more productive, happier on the job, more committed to their companies, and less likely to strike or quit. They are also more likely to be reading the same business publications as their CEOs.

Reform of Social Security is conceivable now because the historic tension between capital and labor is beginning to dissolve. Increasing numbers of Americans have confidence that they can manage their own money. They know that wealth accumulation can provide them with more retirement security than income transfers can. They know too that the risks of investment can be reduced in various ways and must in any case be set against the political risks that affect Social Security. Unsurprisingly, stockowners are more likely than non-owners to support Bush's proposal.

Reform of Social Security is now conceivable because the historic tension between capital and labor is beginning to dissolve.

This last fact suggests something important about the political dynamic of Social Security reform. Social Security has grown over the years for the usual reasons programs grow: The more beneficiaries there are, the larger the constituency for the program; and the bigger the benefit, the greater that constituency's fervor. Private accounts would work the same way, but in reverse. If the government were to let workers invest 2 of the 12 percent of their wages that go to Social Security, almost the whole adult population would be made of investors. Over time, public pressure to let workers invest 3 percent—then 4, then more—would be irresistible.

Opponents of reform have darkly suggested that private accounts, if introduced on a small scale, will eventually completely replace Social Security. They are quite correct, though they are wrong to see this as a Wall Street plot.

Just as Social Security altered public attitudes toward the federal government as a whole, so would universal worker capitalism affect political psychology. Social Security made large-scale income transfers directed by the federal government a matter of routine. The number of groups demanding such transfers naturally proliferated.

Bush-style reform of Social Security could make routine the idea that people should be allowed to save their own money to accomplish important social purposes. People invest primarily to provide for their retirement, but also to finance their children's education and to cover unforeseen medical expenses. Why shouldn't people be allowed to save for these purposes without facing multiple layers of taxation? Why, for that matter, should any savings be subject to multiple taxation? In a nation of investors, such questions are going to be hard to answer. That's why reform of Social Security would almost certainly lead to reform of Medicare and of the tax code as well. (Thomas Saving, a felicitously named economist at Texas A&M, has already designed an investment-based solution for Medicare that has attracted interest from conservatives on Capitol Hill.)

The rise of the new investor class has already led to more capital-friendly policies. In 1989, President Bush was unable to secure a cut in the capital-gains tax even though it was one of his highest priorities. In 1997, a cut passed easily, with bipartisan support and not much debate. The major difference: More than 25 million Americans had entered the stock market in the interim. Their view of capital-gains taxes had changed. Can there be any doubt that their view of corporate taxes will change too?

In worker-capitalist America, successful businessmen will no longer be objects of suspicion but quasi-heroic celebrities. The polls in the Microsoft case have consistently shown public admiration for Bill Gates and hostility to the Justice Department's lawsuit against the company. In John Zogby's poll, only 17 percent of the public favors the department's proposal for a breakup of the company. Says libertarian activist Grover Norquist: "The Roosevelt-Taft attacks on the steel companies would not have survived in investor America." Nadler's Republican Ideas Political Committee is testing the effect of ads on how the Clinton administration's hundreds of lawsuits against corporations affect investors.

The shift toward free-market attitudes brought about by worker capitalism can be analyzed in terms of a field of economics called "public choice." Public-choice scholars look for structural explanations for why the political economy of the welfare state routinely generates irrational public policies. In many cases, they conclude, the problem is that the benefits of such policies are highly visible and concentrated in the hands of a few people who are therefore well organized to defend the policies, while the costs are disguised and dispersed so far and wide as to be practically invisible to those who pay them. Protectionism, for instance, rarely helps the protected industry as much as it hurts consumers and other industries. But even though the costs outweigh the benefits, the distribution of costs and benefits tilts politics in favor of unsound policy.

The problem fades if special interests can be subordinated to some more all-encompassing interest. One way to do this, sought by activists such as Norquist, is to require supermajorities to enact any redistributive policies. Another is to create a massive constituency with a direct interest in the economy as a whole, and thus in sound economic policy. That is what worker capitalism does. When most people have a capital stake in the economy, it isn't necessary to make speculative arguments to persuade them to oppose bad policies; pointing to their bottom lines will suffice.

Conservatives, especially social conservatives, have been slow to appreciate the advantages that the democratization

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of capital ownership offers them. Some, like Gary Bauer, cling to a Buchananite model of the politics of labor that is, as Nadler remarks, "ideologically leftist and demographically obsolete." More commonly, they are so intent on disparaging Clinton that they disparage as well the rising Dow that has occurred on his watch. So what if the Dow is rising, they ask, if our popular culture has gotten filthier? But it has to help conservatives of all stripes if capital ownership makes people think harder about the long-term consequences of their actions and about the behavioral conditions of individual success. Moral dissolution and wealth accumulation are not a natural fit.

Democrats and union leaders have much greater reason to fear worker capitalism. Workers will rely more and more on what Bush calls "the security of ownership" and less and less on their ostensible protection. The Democratic party and the unions could well survive the transition and perhaps even prosper, but doubtless only as very different—and more market-oriented—institutions. It will certainly be fun watching them try to adapt.

Instead of a radical transformation of Social Security, Gov. Bush has prudently decided to approach reform incrementally. His proposal is no less important for that. If enacted, it would put within reach many conservative goals for America that can now scarcely be conceived of. His Social Security plan, all by itself, is reason enough to elect him. **NR**

A Politician Steps Up

Why Bush decided to do it

KATE O'BEIRNE

IN 1980, the Cato Institute produced its first hardcover book, in which Peter Ferrara argued that workers should be permitted to invest their payroll taxes in private retirement accounts. For two subsequent decades, wary politicians kept their distance while conservative think tankers produced shelves of studies promoting private accounts, in the hope that at the right time, the right candidate might be persuaded to adopt their reform.

Probably none of them would have expected this candidate to be George W. Bush, a man with a suspect last name. But Bush apparently took naturally to the idea. There were no epiphanies, no agonizing late-night meetings, just the firm conviction that the time had come for a transformation of one of the oldest programs of the New Deal. Even now—after Bush has danced on "the third rail of American politics" in a race with an opponent who defines himself by his attacks—there is almost a blithe confidence about the issue

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— Hong Kong's Chief Executive C. H. Tung, addressing the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington D.C., April 7, 2000

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in the Bush camp. Some of his top economic aides claim, convincingly, that they aren't aware of the polling on the issue.

As long as three years ago, Ed Crane, president of Cato, and José Piñera, the architect of Chile's pension privatization, were invited to Austin by the governor to discuss social-security accounts over dinner. Crane recalls that Bush favored the reform even then, but recognized that Republicans would have to be ready for Democratic attacks. "This is one area where he needed no prodding," says Bush adviser John Cogan, who remembers first talking with Bush about Social Security reform over a year ago. Back in November, Bush told Tim Russert on *Meet the Press* that personal savings accounts should be part of any Social Security fix, and he hasn't wavered since.

This might sound like spin, but Bush is taking on a hot-button issue when he certainly doesn't have to.

Why the confidence—what Gore might call "smugness"? Cogan, a senior official in President Reagan's Office of Management and Budget and a Hoover Institution economist, notes the confluence of three developments. First, the fact that baby boomers will begin retiring in eight years has brought the "fiscal calamity" facing Social Security much closer. Second, the current Social Security surpluses have permitted politicians to talk about reform without threatening current beneficiaries. And third, the large number of new investors, owing to the widespread use of 401(k) accounts and IRAs, has made the idea of personal savings accounts in the payroll-tax system more palatable to a national audience. As Ed Crane puts it, "Democrats are lazy on this issue, because they've had it so easy for so long. But now, half the public owns stock, and the other half wants to, so you can't just scare them anymore."

But there are other factors particular to Bush that make this idea a natural for him. First, in Texas he was an "agenda" politician—clearly running on the ideas he wanted to implement in office. This is just a repeat. "He does not want to be the kind of president who sits in the Oval Office wondering 'How do I react to the in box?'" says top Bush strategist Karl Rove. "If you don't lay out the big things you want to do, you'll be driven by the nightly news—and this is one of the big things he wants to do." Rove also maintains that Bush is not paralyzed by fear of losing—his dad lost and came through just fine—and thus averse to proposing bold ideas. This might sound like spin, but Bush is, in fact, taking on a hot-button issue when he certainly doesn't have to.

Then, there is Bush's taste—despite his reputation in the press—for conservative ideas. Larry Lindsey, Bush's chief economic adviser, calls the governor a "natural conservative reformer" who recognizes that the Democrats' defense of government dependency represents a fundamental difference between the parties. Lindsey compares his candidate to a "board member of AEI," the conservative Washington-based think tank. The board is full of businessmen who aren't wonks by any means, but are deeply interested in policy. They aren't ideologues either; rather, they bring a healthy respect for free markets from their experience in business. Personal Social Security accounts are an excellent fit for this side of Bush.

Bush also sees himself as a responsible baby boomer. Lindsey explains Bush's willingness to take on Social Security in generational terms. His father's generation of GOP politicians was primarily worried about winning the Cold War, so they left the domestic field to the Democrats. Now, with the Cold War over, it's up to Bush's generation to repair the damage of the welfare state. Doing so would be one of Bush's foremost contributions to the "new responsibility era." Bush says all the time, with his fellow baby boomers in mind, that "it's our turn" to make the tough choices.

Finally, there is Bush's "compassionate conservatism." Cogan is convinced that Bush would favor personal accounts, even in the absence of a crisis in Social Security funding, because he wants to provide an opportunity for low- and moderate-income workers to build wealth. Many of Bush's proposals are pitched to these people on "the outskirts of poverty," from his tax plan to his education reform. Bush speaks with real passion about helping recent immigrants succeed in America, and Social Security reform is just another way to do it. It, too, would serve to pull down what Bush has called the "tollbooth" blocking entry to the middle class.

As for the amazing self-assurance of the Bush team, there may be good cause for it. Even before Bush began to pitch his proposal, polls indicated widespread support for private accounts. In a March poll by John Zogby, 68 percent of the public supported Social Security "privatization" that would permit personal accounts. There was above-average support from minority respondents, and near-unanimous support from those under age 34. Only those over age 70 didn't favor the reform.

The Zogby poll tracks with the road test that personal retirement accounts passed during Rep. Pat Toomey's race in 1998. In Toomey's Pennsylvania district, Democrats outnumber Republicans, and there are a disproportionate number of elderly voters. He still ran—and won—on the promise to allow some portion of payroll taxes to be privately invested. Al Gore is now echoing the objections of Toomey's Democratic opponent, who accused him of jeopardizing Social Security with his "risky scheme." As Toomey explains it, once recipients were reassured that their own benefits wouldn't be affected, and that the reform would be optional for workers, his opponent was in the "nearly indefensible position of arguing that there should be no personal freedom" when it came to retirement savings.

So, Bush promotes his proposal to preserve the Social Security program; Al Gore is determined to preserve the *politics* of Social Security, so beneficial to Democrats for so long. "He wants a mandate," Rove says of Bush. If Bush wins the debate, he will have one—to make the most fundamental reform in the history of the government's largest program. A risk, to be sure. But worth it. **NR**

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From RFK to GWB

In 2000, echoes of 1968

MICHAEL KNOX BERAN

WHAT can Bobby Kennedy possibly teach George W. Bush about how to run for president? The radical-chic senator—he once praised Che Guevara as a revolutionary hero—is not, after all, the kind of politician to whom a conservative turns easily for inspiration. And yet in 1968 Kennedy did precisely what Bush is trying to do today. He made his campaign for president a campaign, in part, against the mentality of the entitlement state—and he did it in the name of compassion.

A number of elements of Bush's "compassionate conservatism" strongly resemble RFK's proposals to reform the entitlement state. Bush's plan to use the tax code to put the market to work solving the problems of the poor is reminiscent of ideas Kennedy pioneered three and a half decades ago. Commonplace though they seem today, Kennedy's proposals to use the Internal Revenue Code to bring private enterprise to the ghetto were innovative ones at the time. Bush wants to use the same sort of thinking to help poor and "working" Americans obtain private health insurance, come up with a down payment on a house, or cover the costs of college or starting a business. Like Bush, Kennedy was skeptical of government-directed efforts to fight poverty; he wanted to find ways to help inner-city residents rebuild their neighborhoods themselves. Kennedy's somewhat utopian scheme called for citizens to do the rebuilding with their own hands—a plan that foundered, in a Kennedy-sponsored test project in Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant, when unsympathetic unions frowned on the idea of competing with a new army of home-builders. Bush circumvents the union problem by proposing to give tax credits to private developers to build and rehabilitate houses in languishing neighborhoods.

RFK and GWB by Roman Genn

Bush, of course, isn't the only politician in the years since Robert Kennedy's death to propose using the tax code to help the less fortunate. Al Gore has floated similar schemes, some of which have found expression in the administration's "empowerment zone" initiatives, which combine tax incentives, job training, low-interest loans, and community grants. Bill Clinton has turned tax credits for the poor into something of a growth industry—and in the process made the tax code more ludicrously complicated than ever. What sets Bush apart isn't his emphasis on tax credits, but his belief that the entitlement state, as it's currently structured, isn't all that compassionate. It nurtures, not self-confident, self-reliant citizens, but groups of servile dependents hooked on the largesse of the central government. A glance at the history books reveals that this is precisely what the entitlement state was intended to do. Compassion didn't play a role in the creation of the earliest welfare state, that which Otto von Bismarck established in Germany in the last quarter of the 19th century. Bismarck, the historian A. J. P. Taylor observed, "did not promote social reform out of love for the German workers." "Sympathy" and "affection," Taylor wrote, were never among the Iron Chancellor's "strong points." Bismarck instead established the *Wohlfahrtstaat* in order to make the lower orders "more subservient" to the state. The American entitlement system—which for Kennedy amounted to a cynical "payoff" that substituted "check-writing machines for male wage-earners"—hasn't proved to be any more compassionate.

The problem with Bush's current challenge to the entitlement system—a challenge that includes his proposal to modernize Social Security with private investment accounts—is that it lacks an underlying philosophy to hold it together. When Kennedy challenged New Deal and Great Society thinking in the 1960s, he offered an argument, not just a set of policy positions. He pointed out that the entitlement state was, in certain respects, inconsistent with older American ideas about the importance of self-reliance. He invoked the liberalism of 19th-century America—the liberalism of Emerson and Lincoln—and celebrated its faith in the power of individual effort. Real compassion, Kennedy argued, consisted in giving people the confidence they needed to make that individual effort; he saw no other way to give them a "chance to be fully self-supporting." At the same time Kennedy recognized what contemporary conservatives too often fail to grasp: that the rhetoric of self-reliance by itself long ago ceased to move Americans. Only by presenting voters with a package in which (a certain kind of) compassion is intended to nurture self-reliance and self-confidence does the older vocabulary of liberal individualism become palatable to them. Calls to reform the entitlement state made in the name of individual liberty (like those of Hayek and Friedman) no longer resonate with an electorate that has been taught to be suspicious of naked individualism. Kennedy demonstrated that

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only by persuading Americans that entitlement reform is what we would now call a kind of tough love—an exercise in a shrewder sort of compassion—will its advocates succeed in making needed changes.

To turn compassionate conservatism into something more than a slogan—the Republican counterpart of the vacuous rhetoric of the Clinton-Gore Third Way—Bush needs to do more than propose policies: He needs to get Americans to rethink the meaning of compassion. Much of the country today—and almost all of the media—take it for granted that a candidate's compassion can be measured by the number of federal dollars he proposes to spend on entitlement programs. A candidate who proposes to spend a lot of dollars cares; a candidate who doesn't, doesn't. If compassion continues to be defined in terms of federal largesse, Al Gore wins the "I care" contest hands down: He simply has to promise to spend more money and to protect the status quo from "risky" attempts to change it. If Bush is to succeed in changing the terms of the debate, he needs to take a page from Robert Kennedy's brief and argue that spending ever greater numbers of federal dollars won't get at the heart of the problem of poverty in America. More check-writing machines do nothing to inspire in people what Emerson called "self-trust"; they do nothing to give people the self-confidence to take back their lives and make something of them. Bush knows this. "We have found that the government can spend money," he has declared in speeches, "but it can't put hope in our hearts or a sense of purpose in our lives." Too often, however, Bush is tempted in his speechmaking to play the part of George the Evangelist: His most compelling insights are lost in a fulsome, missionary-like rhetoric that won't persuade those middle-of-the-road voters who might otherwise be sympathetic to what he has to say.

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If Bush is to succeed in changing the terms of the debate, he needs to take a page from Robert Kennedy's brief.

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If he's to best Gore on what has traditionally been Democratic ground, Bush must do more than redefine the meaning of compassion. He needs to explain why entitlement reform must be coupled with education reform, as well as reform designed to foster greater cooperation between government and faith-based programs. Here Kennedy's example can't help; the late senator didn't venture very far into either education or faith-based territory. And yet entitlement reform won't work unless schools give young people the confidence they need to succeed in a free (as opposed to a servile) society. Few institutions outside the family have a greater responsibility to exercise confidence-building compassion—to "touch the human heart," in Bush's words—than schools do. Bush needs to tell America why the education reforms he's proposing (accountability, local control, parental choice, competition, an emphasis on character-building) will help schools meet their responsibility—and prevent the creation of a new generation of dependents. As Charles Murray has pointed out, the underclass isn't shrinking, it's getting larger. Al Gore, indebted to the teachers' unions, can't fix the problem. Bush needs to do a better job of explaining why he can.

THE OLD-WASP TEXAN

It's never an easy thing to be a patrician in a democracy. (Just ask Coriolanus.) In redefining compassion to make it compatible with American ideals of self-reliance and opportunity for self-betterment, Bush would take a big step toward shedding some of the patrician baggage that burdens him. His father, George H. W. Bush, once claimed not to know what the word patrician meant; but by even the strictest of the old Roman definitions the Bushes are patricians. (There was a senator in the family.) The Bushes, of course, are patricians, not simply in the Roman sense, but in the less formal way we understand the word today: They send their sons to schools like Andover and Yale, they spend their summers in Maine, they count a large number of Protestant clergymen among their forebears. Unlike so many patrician families in politics, however, the Bushes have for a long time refused to play the role of grand seigneurs. When Bush the Elder packed up the family after graduating from Yale and drove them West to "live the dream," as he put it, he did so in order to become an entrepreneur. His oldest son's conservative compassion, like his own "thousand points of light," is, in a way, an entrepreneurial compassion; in emphasizing it, his son calls attention to all that separates his family's brand of compassion from the faintly condescending noblesse oblige that characterized those aristocrats who, like Franklin Roosevelt and Adlai Stevenson, identified their careers with the entitlement state.

The elder Bush's decision to turn his back on Greenwich and light out for the Territory was a smart one. The golden age of patrician dominance in American public life—a period that coincided with the building of the regulatory and administrative state under Wilson and the two Roosevelts—was slowly coming to an end when he brought Barbara and little George to Odessa, Texas, in the summer of 1948. Bobby Kennedy, an almost exact contemporary of the elder Bush, sensed as much himself. He, too, realized that *noblesse* no longer justified a political career; he, too, was moving to embrace a more entrepreneurial model of reform; at one point he even flirted with the idea of moving to Nevada and running for the Senate there, although in the end he never moved out West as Bush did. (Non-patricians like Johnson and Nixon, oddly enough, seem to have been less aware than either Kennedy or Bush *père* that the old seigneurial thinking was doomed; they devoted themselves to expanding the welfare state at a time when more perceptive minds were contemplating retrenchment. Perhaps at some level they were afraid they would otherwise appear boorish and plebeian in comparison with the breezy liberality of men like Stevenson and FDR.) Kennedy did not, of course, believe that the entitlement state should be dismantled; in a number of areas he wanted to see its scope enlarged. But he recognized that it was—as a European (and specifically a German) import—in many ways incompatible with older American traditions and

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ideals. Although the Welfare Reform Act of 1996 was a step in the right direction, one that Kennedy would have applauded, the business of reconciling the entitlement state with older American mores is not yet finished. In pledging to complete the job, the younger Bush would remind people that his own heritage is as much an entrepreneurial as a patrician one.

Some will snicker at the idea that Bush, the product of Kennebunkport summers and the beneficiary of his father's political and business connections, is a genuinely entrepreneurial figure. And yet his experience of life—from the time he spent in public school as a boy in Midland, Texas, to his stints in the private sector—is broader than his opponent's much more narrowly patrician existence. Gore, himself the scion of a patrician (and senatorial) family, a product of St. Alban's and Harvard and summers spent living the life of a gentleman-farmer in Carthage, Tennessee, may genuinely want to "reinvent" the federal government, as he once pledged to do. But his freedom to maneuver is limited. Gore is beholden to the old mandarin elites, to big labor and the bureaucrats, to the teachers' unions and the unrepentant Left, to those who continue to believe that progress results from Washington-directed acts of federal *noblesse* and shrink from reform that threatens the status quo. Gore's debt to the anti-entrepreneurial aristocracy that still dominates the Left—an aristocracy that fears the introduction of freedom, choice, and competition in areas such as education, trade, and Social Security—gives Bush the opportunity to portray himself as the real revolutionary in the race, the entrepreneurial candidate who, if elected, could make progress in fixing an entitlement system that doesn't work, an education system that doesn't educate, a bureaucrat-knows-best mentality that sees poor people as victims, not as men and women who, with a little self-confidence, could get there on their own.

ADDITIONAL PAGES FROM RFK

A note of outrage, of righteous indignation—the kind of controlled anger of which Robert Kennedy was a master—wouldn't be altogether inappropriate in Bush's late-in-the-campaign speeches: for of course people's futures *are* being held hostage by interest groups like the teachers' unions. The *noblesse de cloche*—the petty bureaucrats and placeholders—are holding up the revolution. And Bush, like Kennedy, should be out of doors more often; his campaign should allow people to draw a connection between the largeness of the land—the vast expanse of the country—and the greatness of its opportunities. In ways that aren't entirely clear, Kennedy's ideas about entitlement reform grew out of the muscular patriotism of his early career, his visceral attachment to the American landscape, its startling beauty, the tremendous opportunities it afforded to those who were willing to work. It was a big land; a lot of hard work had made it a great land. But although Kennedy believed that only hard work—blood and sweat—could transform the nation's decaying neighborhoods, he was careful not to sound the tough-hombre theme too loudly in the middle Sixties. After his brother's death, he softened the rhetoric of muscular patriotism that had marked his early speeches. He did so for the same reason that he abandoned his military-style crew cut. He wanted to run for office himself, and he knew that many in his party were suspicious of his youthful conservatism, his ties to Joseph McCarthy, his hard-line anti-Communism. He realized that the upholders of liberal orthodoxy in his party doubted him and wondered whether he had been irredeemably corrupted by the "blood-and-soil" ideals of the anti-Communist Right. Hence Kennedy's dilemma: He had at once to appease the Left and at the same time find a way to remain true to his own robust patriotism.

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Bush, like Kennedy, should be out of doors, drawing a connection between the largeness of the land and the greatness of its opportunities.

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He solved the problem by learning to prefer a patriotism of the image to a patriotism of the word: a sort of photo-op poetry that was in many ways more effective than the hortatory exertions of so many flag-waving stump speeches. The strength of Kennedy's attachment to the land was captured by the photographers and the television newsmen who trailed him as he traveled across the country. Their images—of Kennedy shooting the rapids in the Colorado River, making a pilgrimage to the humid lowlands of the Mississippi Delta, hiking amid the arid rocks of the western canyons, or surrounded by transfixed schoolchildren in the streets of Watts or Harlem—did more than words could to convey the qualities of the candidate's patriotism. (Ronald Reagan, in a different way, was a master of using imagery to convey the strength of his love for the land; in the news footage you would see him clearing brush in the sunlit San Bernadino hills or riding along dusty trails.) When Bush is photographed out of doors, he is usually jogging. Jogging is a yuppie's way of relating to the land, not a leader's. The value of pictures of the candidate-as-jogger is undermined by the delicate fragrance of narcissism that hangs about them: The jogger appears to be more interested in perfecting his own beauty than in coming to terms with that of the country he is passing by. The Bush campaign needs to show Americans, not a candidate who is in good shape, but a candidate who is convinced that the country itself, with all its problems, is in good shape, and remains a land big with promise and possibility.

Can Bush win with a challenge to the entitlement state undertaken in the name of a new (and entrepreneurial) brand of conservative compassion? The answer is unclear. The strategy has never been tested electorally. (At least not in a presidential election.) Robert Kennedy was assassinated in the midst of his campaign for the White House; and in any event he struggled with the Gore-like problem of trying to reconcile his desire for reform with the need to appease left-of-center interest groups in his party. Bush doesn't have that problem; he can go farther than Kennedy could in the cause of reform. But Bush's strategy is still, as Gore would say, a risky one. As any entrepreneur will tell you, you need to take risks if you want rewards. **NR**

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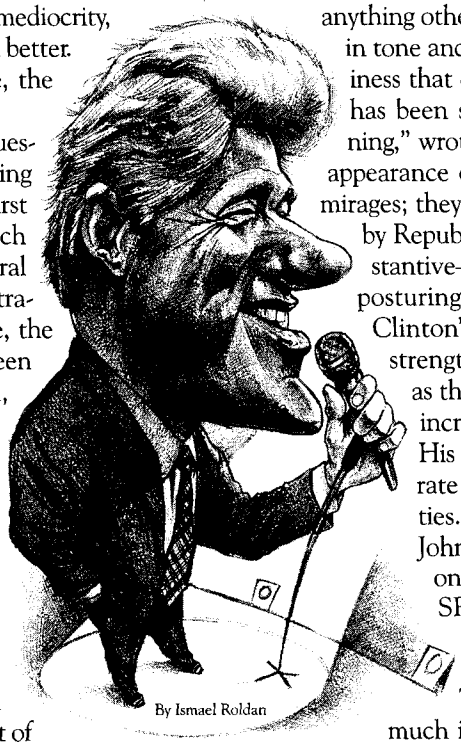
Heeere's Bill!

Clinton finds his true calling

NOEMIE EMERY

BILL CLINTON'S stunning performance at the White House correspondents' dinner—following his stunning performance at the radio and television correspondents' dinner, following his stunning press conference, which followed his unusually stunning State of the Union address—confirmed something about which suspicions had been building: He is not really a politician, much less president, but a truly inspired comedic performer who has only now found his métier. In fact, Clinton's life can be seen as a climb toward this moment. While his presidency has stayed at the level of true mediocrity, his performance skills have become better and better. The timing is perfect, the phrasing exquisite, the intonations just so.

This revelation, of course, answers many questions. It tells us what he should do on leaving office: go straight to Las Vegas, if he is not first indicted. It explains why he has had so much trouble getting the hang of his office: the moral vacuity, the odd lack of care for the country's traditions, the emphasis on style over substance, the growing lack of interest in policy. He has been miscast, in the wrong kind of production, before the wrong audience. He belongs out with DreamWorks, not in the capital; in a nightclub, not in the Oval Office; in the company of Fred Allen, Woody Allen, and the Borscht Belt performers, not of Washington, Lincoln, and Reagan. We see things more clearly now. Why did it take us so long?


By Ismael Roldan

Of course, the line between show biz and politics has never been broad and bright. George Washington was a master of illusion and spectacle. Andrew Jackson played the part of himself with brio and gusto. So did Theodore Roosevelt, a traveling circus. Any list of the great theatrical talents of the 20th century would have to begin with Franklin Roosevelt, Charles de Gaulle, and Winston Churchill, who in their wartime settings made the Barrymores and the Old Vic look pallid and boring. Cool, clever Ike played a warm, genial bumbler. Then came John Kennedy, who looked like a film star, had a sister who married one, and in some ways carried on like Errol Flynn and Clark Gable. It was then not too long (20 years) before the president who looked like a film star was followed by the one who had actually been one, Ronald Reagan. But there were yawning differences between these men and Clinton: They were serious people who used their appeal and their wiles to advance their agendas. Clinton uses his office and his country to promote himself. They had causes. Clinton *is* one, at least to himself. Reagan, a kind of politician even while he was a film star, saw the public man gain ascendancy in his complex of interests and used his entertainment career as a springboard to high office. By contrast, Clinton, who began as a politician, even a wonkish one, saw the performer more and more take him over. By now, it is all he is.

Clinton's transition took place in a series of steps. He came in as a credentialed career politician with a large cohort of policy followers, the product of his and his wife's years of networking. They were Rhodes scholars, fellow governors, friends from the Renaissance Weekend and think tanks, liberals fat with ideas from twelve years in the wilderness, and eager to get the show going. Alas, the show bombed, and Clinton, stricken with fear of not being renewed in 1996, vowed never to risk it again. From November 1994 on, his presidency would be a series of struggles against cancellation, interspersed with long stretches of apathy. Never again would he be doing serious battle for anything other than himself. Soon there were changes in tone and tactics. "The sloppy, hyperactive wonkiness that defined Clinton's first two years in office has been supplanted . . . by a sleek, tactical cunning," wrote Joe Klein in *Newsweek*. "He gives the appearance of taking stands . . . but these are ploys, mirages; they exist only to undermine positions taken by Republicans. He doesn't fight *for* anything substantive—except, of course, re-election . . . he is posturing . . . lip-synching the presidency." Clinton's fight for survival had the effect of strengthening his show-business attachments, as the need for amassing large sums of money increased his reliance on Hollywood friends. His invites for state dinners went to second-rate comics, a sure sign of his sense of priorities. He had Sandy Berger waste time with John Travolta's pet causes, the sort of favor one star does for another. The guests in the SRO Lincoln Bedroom tended to be Tinseltown *machers*, while his old friends had trouble retaining his interest. They no longer seemed to have that much in common. Policy had gone from being an end in itself to being a prop for the characters. The presidency had gone from being the chief executive office to being more of a vehicle—starring cool Bill Clinton.

How far this had gone quickly became apparent when Clinton, his show renewed for another four years, somehow appeared to lose heart. At a stage when most presidents get into trouble by being all too proactive, he seemed to lose interest. The by-products of politics—the crowds, the applause, the stage-management—were for him the essence. Governing was no longer enough. Luckily for him, his ennui was cured in January 1998, when the sluggish plot line was revived by an astounding development, and Bill the Performer came into his own. His State of the Union address—days after the scandal exploded—was the first in a series of Clinton productions that were less dramatic for what was said in them than that they went on at all. He spent much of the year, when not talking to

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Just Say Not Guilty?

The jury right to say "not guilty" is an essential safeguard against injustice. Jury nullification dates back to English common law and the founding of the United States.

- ☑ **Jurors in early 19th-century America routinely refused to enforce the Alien and Sedition Act.**
- ☑ **Jurors in mid-19th-century America widely rejected the Fugitive Slave Act.**
- ☑ **Jurors in the early 20th-century America refused to enforce Alcohol Prohibition.**

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lawyers, in a succession of sickening tableaux: going to church, waving his Bible; semi-confessions; weepy sessions with none-too-bright clerics and pseudo-clerics; emotional meetings to shore up his base.

When he was acquitted, it was clearer than ever that he was addicted to drama. Hams that they were, FDR, Kennedy, and Reagan spent most of their time governing, which was their real interest. Clinton has now shown his utter indifference to any aspect of governing that does not involve stagecraft. He raises funds, his pastime of choice. He campaigns, if for other people. He spends his days traveling from one crowd to another, wringing the last drops out of celebrity, hanging out with sports stars and film stars against the grim day when someone else will be president, and he will be only a cameo player. He seems to regard this with absolute terror. A Star, it is clear, will have died.

If Clinton's days are more like a celeb's than a leader's, there is reason to think that his emotional profile is less like that of a politician—even a charismatic one—than that of an entertainer. In her new book, *The Case Against Hillary Clinton*, Peggy Noonan quotes a longtime friend of the Clintons on their ongoing need for acclaim. They have "a great need to be loved and admired . . . an inordinate need for tribute from others . . . They have an over-inflated view of themselves, yet they can't maintain that unless they get the adulation of an individual, or, in her case and his case, a crowd." Noonan is, of course, Clinton-averse, but the convincing thing about this assessment is that it is repeated so often by those who are not. It is often maintained that Clinton hates vacations, has few real friends and no interests, and is only half-alive when not "on" before others. This is not what most good presidents are like. They like applause; Clinton requires it. They enjoy the performance part of the presidency as part of the much larger project of leadership; Clinton just needs to perform. Even his communication style is subtly different. They tended to bond with an audience in order to lead it to a higher objective: to save the Union, to improve the Union, to fight the Depression, to battle the Axis, to help the hopeless, to combat the Evil Empire, to win the space race, to go to the moon. Clinton's bonding is all on the personal level, and to no other end than itself. Their speeches translate into acts, and are remembered for ages. Clinton's speeches move nothing, and are rapidly gone.

Allied to all this is a hunger for credit, especially for things he hasn't done. His campaign appearances in 1997 (mainly for candidates who were later defeated) featured complaints about gross ingratitude. "Whether schmoozing with wealthy donors or stumping for candidates, Clinton has spent much of the last three days wondering aloud why he and his record seem to be underappreciated," wrote Ceci Connolly in the *Washington Post*. Here is the voice of the vainest of actors, bitching to his agent about his low billing, or that his best scenes have wound up on the cutting-room floor.

Yes, it seems that we have judged the poor boy by all the wrong standards, and the fault may be ours more than his. The self-absorption, the tantrums, the petulance; the easy acceptance of casting-couch morals, the belief that all laws are made to be broken (and shouldn't apply to him in the first place)—these are par for the course in show-business celebrities, as is his belief that there is no such thing as bad publicity and that shame doesn't, or shouldn't, exist. In the world he belongs in, this is perfectly normal. Only in a more ordinary world does it look strange. A star is expected to carry on, throw fits, get arrested—and then have the studio take care of everything. A president is expected to behave rather differently: to keep his problems off stage; to enforce laws and obey them; to put the country above his own interests. A president can laugh at his personal tics, but not at his law-breaking activities. He should realize that there is a difference between a First Lady joking about dresses and china, and a president joking about his impeachment. He should realize that the bully pulpit *is* a pulpit, and not the set of the *Tonight* show. But then Clinton isn't a president—he just plays one on television. And none too convincingly. It's the one role he never gets right.

Ah, Bill: Why didn't you get career counseling sooner? Think what we would have been spared. No tumults, confusion, hysterics, and hearings; no partisan meltdowns, no aggravated ill will. We could have been discussing things other than stains on dresses and the meaning of "sex" and "is." And you? You could, at this moment, have been happily entering some TV hall of fame as a beloved performer, instead of preparing to enter history as a jerk of a president, who had it all and then lost it, because, for all of his brains and training, he never realized what "president" means. You did hang on to office, but as the joke that you are. There are books by your friends, and books by your enemies, and these can be colored by partisan feelings. But, on the basis of what's coming out from the centrist observers—the Richard Posners, the Susan Schmidts, the Michael Weisskopfs—your place in history doesn't look promising. And how about your beloved polls? In a recent survey concerning all presidents, you *define* mediocrity, ranking 21st in performance out of a field of 41, and coming in dead last in moral authority. According to Gallup, your presence—your endorsement, your favor, your being—is costing Al Gore a full eight points in the polls. Yes, you, Mr. Wonderful. That's where you stand, once you get past your base: your interest groups, the Baldwin brothers, your high-rolling Hollywood peers. Of course *they* love you—they *are* you, and they share all of your values. And when you join them, you'll get along fine.

And that's the upside of this whole sorry business. You have found your true calling, after trial and error. You have found your next move, your new life, your midlife reinvention. All signs lead to a lounge in Las Vegas. And these signs, of course, have been there all along. "He came in here and he trashed the place, and it's not his place," said David Broder, in a very apt image. This is what rock stars do to their hotel rooms. Everything about you spells things like "Star—spoiled rotten" as opposed to "commander in chief." Your personal thugs, who threaten knee-capping, sound more like the retinue of the late Frank Sinatra than a White House staff ever hired by anyone. Your sins—the Jones, Willey, and, worst of all, Broaddrick matters—sound more like the violent scandals that surround sports and film stars than the closet trysts of Warren Harding or the poolside romps of John Kennedy; and make them seem terribly innocent.

You can't even sin like a regular president, because you aren't one. You aren't commander in chief but our master of ceremonies, our very first president whose role model seems to be Billy Crystal on Oscar night. "Hail to the Chief" is not your entering music. No, no. What fits you is, "Heeere's Bill!" **NR**

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Restoring Justice

If Bush wins, a great and urgent task

BYRON YORK

In the span of a few hours on January 8, 1982, the Reagan Justice Department, in office less than a year, wrapped up three troublesome cases it had inherited from previous administrations. First, the department withdrew a mammoth antitrust suit against IBM. William Baxter, the new head of the antitrust division, explained that he had little choice in the matter; after 13 years of trying, the Justice Department simply didn't have much of a case. Next, Baxter announced the settlement of an equally mammoth antitrust suit against AT&T—in a historic deal that led to the breakup of the phone company. And finally, the department reversed the government's position in the Bob Jones University case, in which the school had challenged the Internal Revenue Service's policy of denying tax-exempt status to institutions that discriminate against blacks. Saying the IRS had made up the policy on its own, with no authority from Congress, the Reaganites sided with Bob Jones.

Bang, bang, bang. It was a decisive example of a new administration clearing the decks, getting rid of high-profile cases that had languished in the Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations and freeing the Justice Department to work on the new president's agenda.

Next January, if George W. Bush wins the White House, Republicans will, for the first time in 20 years, take over the department following a Democratic administration. There will again be plenty to clear out—the Microsoft case will likely linger into the next year, to name one big example—but Republicans will face problems far greater than any pending court case. The Clinton Justice Department, in the view of many in the GOP as well as some independents and Democrats, has been deeply compromised by a series of fundamentally political initiatives—lawsuits against tobacco companies, threats of suits against gun manufacturers—and by its own actions in investigations involving the president and other top administration officials. Unlike the Carter/Reagan transition, which veterans of both sides remember as a smooth hand-off between lawyers who had a mutual respect, the greatest challenge facing Republicans in a Clinton/Bush transition would be the restoration of the department's integrity. "There's been a leadership vacuum, and the department has been politicized," says former Bush administration attorney general William Barr. "The primary task will be to rebuild professionalism and morale—the department has to be re-professionalized."

Janet Reno by David Smith

SMOKED OUT

One of the earliest and biggest decisions a new attorney general will have to make is what to do with *United States* v. *Philip Morris, R. J. Reynolds, Brown & Williamson, Lorillard, Liggett, and American Tobacco*. Announced by Bill Clinton in his January 1999 State of the Union address, and filed by the Justice Department last September, the lawsuit accuses cigarette makers of a 45-year conspiracy to deceive the government and the public about the health risks of smoking. It asks that the tobacco companies be forced to turn over all profits earned as a result of the conspiracy—in effect, everything they have made since the mid 1950s.

The problem with the suit, according to many experts, is that it has no firm basis in law. The Justice Department argues that a statute providing for the government to be reimbursed for the treatment of injured soldiers, a law covering Medicare insurance, and RICO, the federal racketeering statute, together empower the government to sue Big Tobacco. "I was surprised that the federal government was even bringing a case, unless it was just to put the companies out of business," says Carter administration attorney general Griffin Bell, who in private practice has represented Brown & Williamson. Adds Michael Uhlmann, a veteran of the Ford Justice Department and Reagan White House, "It's so novel and so potentially mischievous that it would be irresponsible for the new administration not to take a very, very hard look at it."

And look at it they would. While George W. Bush has not said what he would do with the case, he has stated on many occasions that he believes in "legislation instead of lawsuits." If he is elected, and if that principle guides his decisions in office, it is possible that a Republican Justice Department will withdraw the suit, bringing the litigation—and a major part of Bill Clinton's war on Big Tobacco—to an abrupt end.

The department might well make a similar decision in the case of gun manufacturers. Housing secretary Andrew Cuomo has threatened to sue gun makers unless the companies agree to a number of concessions that the administration calls "gun safety" measures. Although Cuomo is leading the charge, if a suit were ever brought, it would be the Justice Department's job to do the suing. A new attorney general might conclude that, as in the case of tobacco, the gun suit

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has no legal grounding—that any action on the issue should come from Congress, not from the courts—and dispense with Cuomo's campaign.

Beyond that, a new Justice Department would look at dozens of other politically tinged Clinton initiatives. Justice's efforts to take over police departments in New York and Los Angeles would certainly face scrutiny. So would dozens of decisions in the field of civil rights and affirmative action, where the administration has supported racial preferences in education and numerical remedies in employment cases, among other things. The same would be true of the department's defense of racially gerrymandered congressional districts.

Finally, the department would have to finish up the case of *United States* v. *Microsoft*. Although a new administration would have the option of reversing course—it could still withdraw the case, in spite of Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson's ruling that Microsoft is a monopoly—it seems more likely that a new attorney general would decide against any drastic action. "I do not think the next administration can or would disown the Microsoft case," says Stuart Gerson, who headed the department's civil division in the final years of the Bush administration. "It's a decided case." But Gerson is quick to add that a new administration might have new ideas on the proper remedy for the Microsoft monopoly; even though the Clinton administration has called for the company to be broken in two, a Republican Justice Department might throw its weight behind a less severe penalty.

THE HANGOVER OF SCANDAL

As complex as those cases are, a new attorney general would face a far more delicate task in dealing with the legacy of the Clinton scandals and their effect on the Justice Department. The department's credibility has been enormously damaged by its behavior in the campaign-finance investigation and the Monica Lewinsky affair—to name just the two most serious examples—but there are serious questions about what a new administration could do to make things right. Should it devote time and energy to investigating the investigations? Or simply strengthen safeguards against corruption and move on?

First, campaign finance. When Janet Reno resisted calls from Republicans (and some Democrats) to ask for an independent counsel to investigate the web of illegal foreign donations to the 1996 Clinton/Gore reelection campaign, she committed Justice itself to a probe that would touch on the president, the vice president, and top White House and Democratic National Committee officials. Reno chose a relatively low-ranking prosecutor to head a new campaign-finance task force, and then made sure the investigation's scope was severely limited. Even when Reno was forced to bring in a respected prosecutor, Charles La Bella, to head the investigation, she maintained tight control.

"They did not use the tactics that are normal in most cases, which is you get the smaller fry and work your way up," says Sen. Fred Thompson, who had many unhappy run-ins with the department in the course of his own campaign-finance investigation. (Thompson was for several years a federal prosecutor.) "They were prohibited from doing that in some cases, and that's just short of a cover-up." All the while—even after it was revealed that La Bella and FBI director Louis Freeh favored an independent counsel—Reno remained dead-set against an outside investigation. In the end, she made plea-bargain deals with two of the main figures in the scandal, John Huang and Charlie Trie, in which both men got no-jail, wrist-slap punishments and did not admit any wrongdoing relating to the 1996 presidential campaign.

Reno's actions left more than a few Republicans sputtering with rage and frustration. But what can be done now? There are some who would urge the new attorney general to take a look at the conduct of the campaign-finance investigation, perhaps by appointing a quasi-independent group of outsiders, like retired federal judges, to conduct a probe. "Given the cloud that has hung over a lot of these investigations, any new administration would want to take a thorough look at that," says Michael Uhlmann. The new attorney general, Uhlmann adds, "would need to know whether it was simply a matter of mistakes being made, or whether there was something worse."

Others aren't so sure. "I'm skeptical that a new department would devote substantial resources to going back over those," says William Barr. "My guess is that a new Justice Department would probably leave a lot of those investigations to Congress." And would Congress be terribly interested? "I think that's pretty much all over with," says Fred Thompson. "I think the new administration ought to be mostly forward looking."

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A new attorney general would face the delicate responsibility of dealing with the legacy of the Clinton scandals and their effect on the Justice Department.

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The same reasoning might apply to the issue of the department's conduct in the Lewinsky matter. In many episodes during the investigation, Reno and her subordinates supported White House positions against independent counsel—and fellow Justice Department prosecutor—Kenneth Starr. For example, on the questionable and ultimately discredited notion that there was a "protective-function privilege" barring Secret Service officers from testifying before Starr's grand jury, Reno sided with the president in a way that seemed designed to delay the probe with months of litigation.

Then there was the department's decision to investigate Starr himself. In November 1998, just days before Starr's much-awaited testimony before the House Judiciary Committee, Reno called him to the Justice Department and sprang the news that the department's Office of Professional Responsibility was investigating alleged misconduct by his office. It seemed like a clear attempt to undermine a duly appointed prosecutor. According to authors Susan Schmidt and Michael Weisskopf in the new book *Truth at Any Cost:*

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Ken Starr and the Unmaking of Bill Clinton, Starr was furious, "unable to comprehend how an attorney general could launch an investigation of the author of the impeachment referral just as Congress was getting ready to act on it."

Starr told Reno it was vitally important that the Office of Professional Responsibility probe be kept secret. Reno promised there would be no leaks. "If it's public," she said, according to Schmidt and Weisskopf, "the only person madder than you is me." What Starr didn't know was at that very hour his office had received a call from a reporter who had gotten word of the new investigation. The Justice Department had leaked the news even before Starr was finished hearing it.

While the incident showed the department acting in bad faith to protect the president and harm the prosecutor, and no doubt tarnished the reputation of the department in some Washington legal circles, there seems little that a new attorney general could—or should—do about it. "When you're looking at the Justice Department and Starr, the department wasn't really the problem," says one former Republican official. "If you focus too much on Janet Reno, you miss it, because it's the *Clinton* administration—the publicity machine that the government ran designed to denigrate Ken Starr." Whatever the case, it's all over now, and a new administration would be unwise to spend the political capital required to reopen the case.

Instead, a new attorney general must address the question that was at the center of Janet Reno's tenure: How should the Justice Department deal with allegations of wrongdoing by high government officials? The problem is sure to arise in a new administration and is especially critical now that the independent-counsel law has expired. If the next attorney general doesn't answer the question quickly and straightforwardly, he'll inevitably find himself in the middle of a scandal with no rules to go by.

CLEANING HOUSE

Looking back, it's clear that many of the problems of the Clinton Justice Department began to emerge even before Bill Clinton took office. First the president-elect let the entire transition period pass without a solid candidate for attorney general. Then, once in office, he backed down from his first choice of Zoe Baird, unsuccessfully floated the name of Kimba Wood, and finally settled on third choice Reno, who wasn't sworn in until March 12, 1993, seven weeks into the new administration.

Even worse, the new president—and First Lady—seemed eager to run the department from the White House. They installed Webster Hubbell, a friend of both Clintons, as the No. 3 official in the department. By 1995, Hubbell was in prison, guilty of cheating his law clients. "The idea of having someone like that in the department for a long period of time, having him plead and be unrepentant, having him refuse to cooperate with law enforcement, sent a terrible message," says one former Republican Justice official. "Terrible." At about the same time, the new administration seemed unconcerned by charges of partisanship and mismanagement when it took the extraordinary step of firing every United States attorney in the country. "That made my jaw drop," Michael Uhlmann recalls. "Most U.S. attorneys are not active partisans, and, although the attorney general had the right to dismiss them, there was no particular reason why one would wish to exercise it." And then came the investigations of the president. In early 1994, Reno appointed a Whitewater special prosecutor, Robert Fiske, only after the White House gave her the signal to do it. Then, after a panel of federal judges fired Fiske and appointed Starr—this was long before the Lewinsky scandal—Reno stood by silently as the president resisted subpoenas and actively encouraged witnesses not to cooperate with prosecutors.

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Being vulnerable to the whims of the White House compromised the Justice Department's performance in matters stretching far beyond the investigations of high officials.

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But being vulnerable to the whims of the White House compromised the Justice Department's performance in matters stretching far beyond the investigations of high officials. It also made the department vulnerable to foolish ideas like the tobacco lawsuit. In 1997, Reno told Congress that she had no legal grounds on which to bring the suit. The next year, after the president made it clear that a tobacco suit would be a featured part of his legacy, she decided that there was a basis for action after all. To run the case, she hired a veteran antitobacco activist who had spent his career working for Ralph Nader, Henry Waxman, and David Kessler. And then she claimed that politics played no role in the matter.

The result of all of this is that the Justice Department is in a precarious state as the presidential election approaches. Everyone interviewed for this article stated strongly that it is crucial for the next president to appoint an attorney general who is not only a person of integrity but who also has the strength and skill to restore the department's independence from the White House. "It will be the biggest challenge of the next administration," says Fred Thompson. "The attorney general has been in over her head, and the department has suffered substantially. You have to restore competence, management, and morale."

And who could do that? It's hard to argue the case for Al Gore. Not only has the vice president made passionate statements supporting administration policies on issues like tobacco and guns, he has also defended the president repeatedly and emotionally through the course of several scandals. And just for good measure, his brother-in-law was a top official in the department for most of the Clinton years. It seems unthinkable that Gore would initiate the reforms the department needs so badly. That kind of overhaul could come only with a turnover in parties controlling the executive branch. "If you want to clean house, it would be better to have a Republican," says Griffin Bell. "Then, you can just change everybody." **NR**

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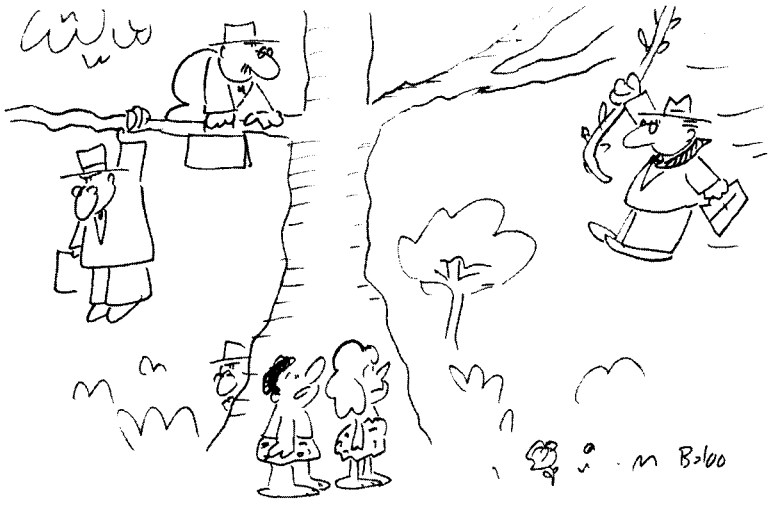
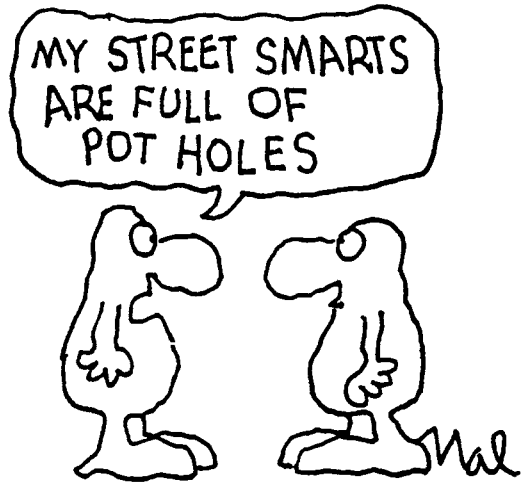


"I guess it stands to reason—if you have a law of the jungle, you have to have lawyers of the jungle."



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Music for Our Ears

ARAM BAKSHIAN JR.

Let Us Talk of Many Things: The Collected Speeches, by William F. Buckley Jr. (Prima/Forum, 511 pp., $30)

THIRTY years ago, on a drizzly autumn evening at the University of Maryland, I first heard Bill Buckley address a live audience. I use the verb "heard" advisedly. It was not until later that evening, at a reception, that I actually saw him. The students had turned out in such large numbers that I had to listen to Buckley's speech along with an overflow crowd of several hundred via the sound system in the corridor outside the packed auditorium.

Curiously, or perhaps not so curiously, my clearest memory of that evening is not what Buckley actually said to the students but the impact he had on them. They were rapt, occasionally amused, and intensely attentive. These are scarcely the characteristics one tends to associate with student crowds in the 1970s, but there was something about Bill Buckley, about what the man said and the way he said it, that won him a friendly and respectful hearing in what one would have expected to be hostile territory.

Why? Perhaps part of the answer is to be found in David Brooks's foreword to *Let Us Talk of Many Things*, an annotated collection of Buckley speeches spanning an amazing half century.

For all Buckley's contributions to conservative ideas [Brooks writes], his most striking contribution is to the conservative personality. He made being conservative attractive and even glamorous. One suspects that more people were inspired by his presence at these events than were converted by the power of mere logic. It would be wonderful if we could go back . . . armed with the knowledge we now possess: that in most cases, subsequent events have proved that Buckley's tormentors were wrong, and he, it transpires, was right.

Mr. Bakshian, editor in chief of *American Speaker*, has served as a speechwriter to three U.S. presidents, most recently as director of speechwriting for Ronald Reagan.

The music-maker

Now, thanks to the publication of *Let Us Talk of Many Things*, we *can* go back and, in appreciating the speeches, we can reach a fuller appreciation of the speaker himself, that enigmatic, indispensable man who, almost singlehandedly, won American conservatives acceptance, if grudging acceptance, in the political and cultural mainstream. Characteristically, Buckley takes a more self-deprecating view of himself, as when in his introductory essay he recounts the successful noon lecture he delivered on a California campus at the height of the anti-Vietnam frenzy:

> After it was over, I said rather complacently to my host, a professor from the department of psychology, that it was reassuring that I had the power to compel a college audience to listen to me on so excitable a subject. His comment was wonderfully deflating: "Don't you understand, Mr. Buckley? When you speak, they treat you as they would a man from the moon. They don't care what you say. They are just biologically curious."

If so, his student audience was unknowingly adhering to one of Buckley's own earliest maxims, expounded in a Class Day Oration at Yale 50 years ago: "Nothing, it is true, is healthier than honest scrutiny, with maybe even a little debunking thrown in."

Again and again, it is the Buckley gift for scrutiny and debunking that skewers the foe while entertaining the audience. For example, shortly after the launching of the Reagan Revolution in 1981, he began his commencement address to the Cornell University Graduate School of Business and Public Administration by explaining that:

> I have been asked to talk about the debate going on in Washington over the startling new approach to economic policy. One week ago I spent an hour on television with my old friend John Kenneth Galbraith. The nature of the economic revolution going on these days is best measured by my informing you that Professor Galbraith spent most of the hour talking about the dangers of inflation. If Ronald Reagan accomplishes nothing more, he will go down in history as having catalyzed a fear of inflation in John Kenneth Galbraith, Edward Kennedy, and Tip O'Neill.

He then went on neatly to eviscerate Jimmy Carter for his shabby performance in the late presidential campaign, only slightly spoiling the effect by summoning up a fanciful picture of Carter "planting a three-cornered hat on his head and declaring himself the descendant of Napoleon." As any good military historian will tell you, while Napoleon

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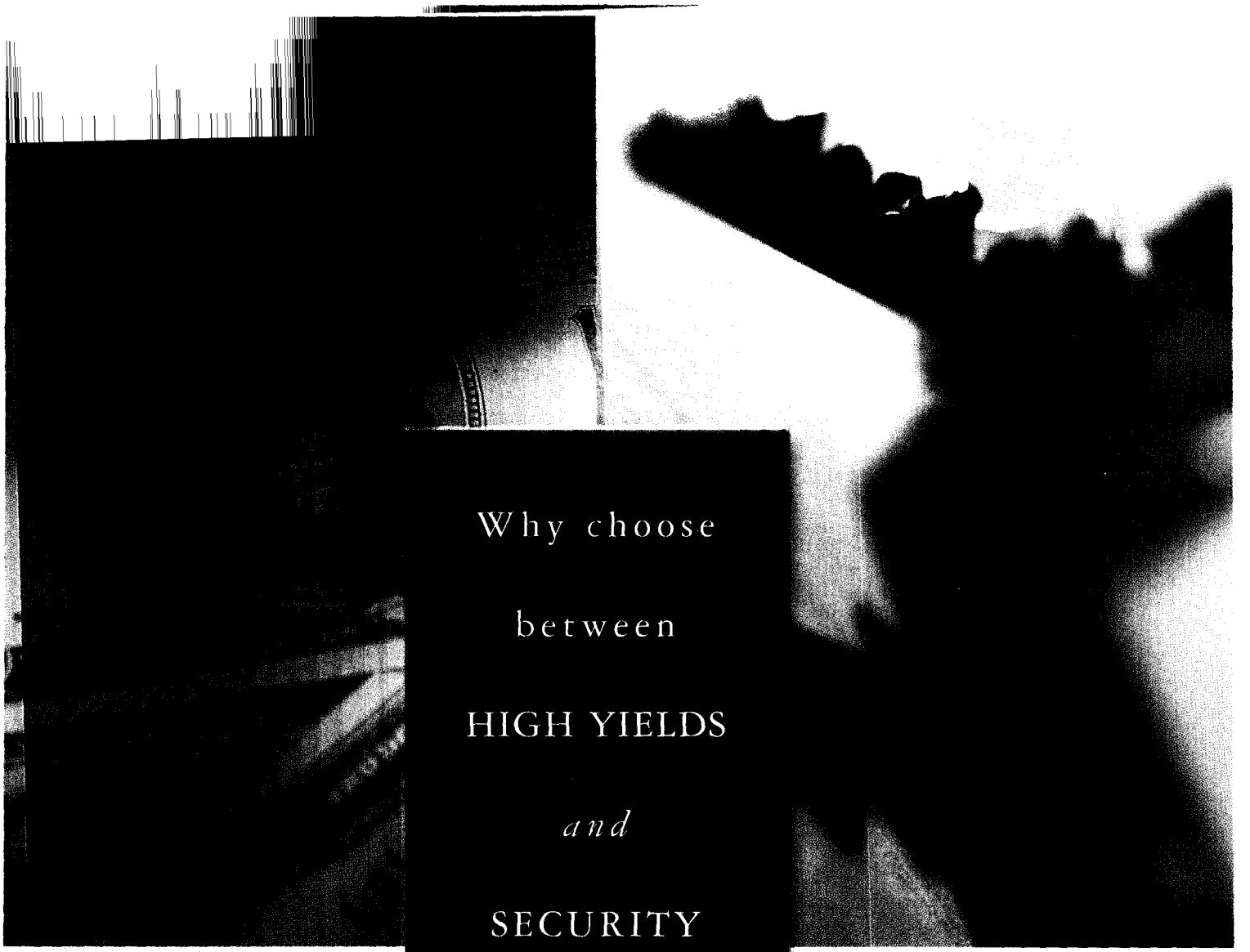

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did wear a cocked hat, it was a bicorne, not a tricorne, the latter having gone out of martial fashion by the end of the 18th century.

Buckley himself is more catholic when it comes to choice of headgear, wearing hats as speaker, columnist, editor, television personality, diplomat, master mariner, and novelist with equal aplomb. But even at his most entertaining, there is true moral substance beneath the style. In a 1984 speech at the University of Arizona, he explained as much when he described what makes Blackford Oakes, the hero of his successful string of spy novels, tick:

> Blackford Oakes has weaknesses spiritual and corporal. But a basic assumption guides him. It is that the survival of everything we cherish depends on the survival of the culture of liberty; and that this hangs on our willingness to defend this extraordinary country of ours, so awfully mixed up, so much of the time; so schizophrenic in its understanding of itself and its purposes; so crazily indulgent of its legion of wildly ungovernable miscreants—to defend it at all costs. With it all, this idealistic republic is the finest bloom of nationhood in all recorded time, and save only that God may decide that the land of the free and the home of the brave has outrun its license on history, we Americans must contend, struggle, and if necessary fight for America's survival.

One of the pleasant side benefits of this rich collection is the occasional glimpse into the personal feelings of this highly stylized public performer. I particularly enjoyed the unabashed paternal pride he expressed when introducing his novelist son, Christopher, at a New York event, and his moving—but objectively penetrating— eulogy for the fascinating, occasionally irritating, and ever-prodigious Clare Boothe Luce.

■

As one reads Bill Buckley's speeches one also hears his voice, as distinctive and original as his prose.

■

There are many other moments of warmth and whimsy to be garnered amidst all of the polished polemics. And of course, as one reads Bill Buckley's speeches one also hears his voice, as distinctive and original as his prose. As an occasional music critic, I have always admired Buckley's skill at the keyboard. But the voice is the instrument of his greatest virtuosity, and his metaphors are even more melodic than the music he plays.

For a half century now, Bill Buckley has been one of the most popular draws on the speaking circuit. Dipping into *Let Us Talk of Many Things* shows why. From his earliest efforts in the 1950s to the very last page, Buckley's speeches are alive with wit, conviction, and a lucid, fluent grace few of his contemporaries can match. And they are as much of a delight on the printed page as from the podium. Patinated rather than rusted, they have stood the severest test of all for public utterances—the test of time. **NR**

■ SHELF LIFE ■

MEMORIAL DAY, followed by the June 6 D-Day anniversary, will offer a welcome opportunity to relive the heroism of America's mid-century fight against fascism. Those looking for a serviceable overview of the war will enjoy *A War to Be Won: Fighting the Second World War* by Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett (Harvard/Belknap, 656 pp., $35), a handsomely produced volume with clear, understandable maps. It's a concise account of the military (as opposed to the political) dimension of the war and will help readers looking for the basic story of the movement of armies and navies.

Many readers who feel they already know enough background about the war—as well as those more interested in its political and cultural dimensions—will find rewarding material in a couple of other new releases. *I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi Years 1942–1945* by Victor Klemperer (Random House, 556 pp., $29.95) is the second volume of an extremely valuable primary source on life in the Third Reich. (The first volume, also strongly recommended, is now available in paperback.)

The book wins the reader's respect with its very first entry, dated January 1, 1942, and remarkable for its insightful frankness: "It is said children still have a sense of wonder, later one becomes blunted.—Nonsense. A child takes things for granted, and most people get no further; only an *old* person, who *thinks*, is aware of the wondrous."

The man who wrote these lines was clearly not a sentimentalist. Klemperer was a Jewish German who had converted to Protestantism and was spared the concentration camps because he had a gentile wife. He provides a ground-level view of the deprivation and harassment of daily life under the Nazi regime, and while he provides an eyewitness account of a major historical event, the bombing of Dresden, it is the small details that are most telling. From August 1942: "At Woolworth's one can buy a toothbrush if one hands in a used one in return." August 1943: "On the way home I was wounded by the abuse of a well-dressed, intelligent-looking boy of perhaps eleven or twelve years of age. 'Kill him!—Old Jew, old Jew!' The boy must have parents who reinforce what he is taught in school . . ."

It took the greatest military crusade in history to overthrow that regime. Just how close a call it was is evident in *"This Is Berlin": Radio Broadcasts from Nazi Germany* by William L. Shirer (Overlook, 450 pp., $37.95). These transcripts of Shirer's reports from Berlin from 1938 to 1940 paint a vivid picture of Nazism at its zenith, when victory was following victory with seemingly unstoppable momentum. Shirer is famous for his 1960 book, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, but reading this new book will give you a sense of how much scarier World War II was before the outcome was known. It makes the heroism of our American soldiers even more striking and proves that there's no such thing as being "on the right side of history." It wasn't history that turned back the Nazi tide, but some very specific individuals, whom we honor at this season of remembrance. —MICHAEL POTEMRA

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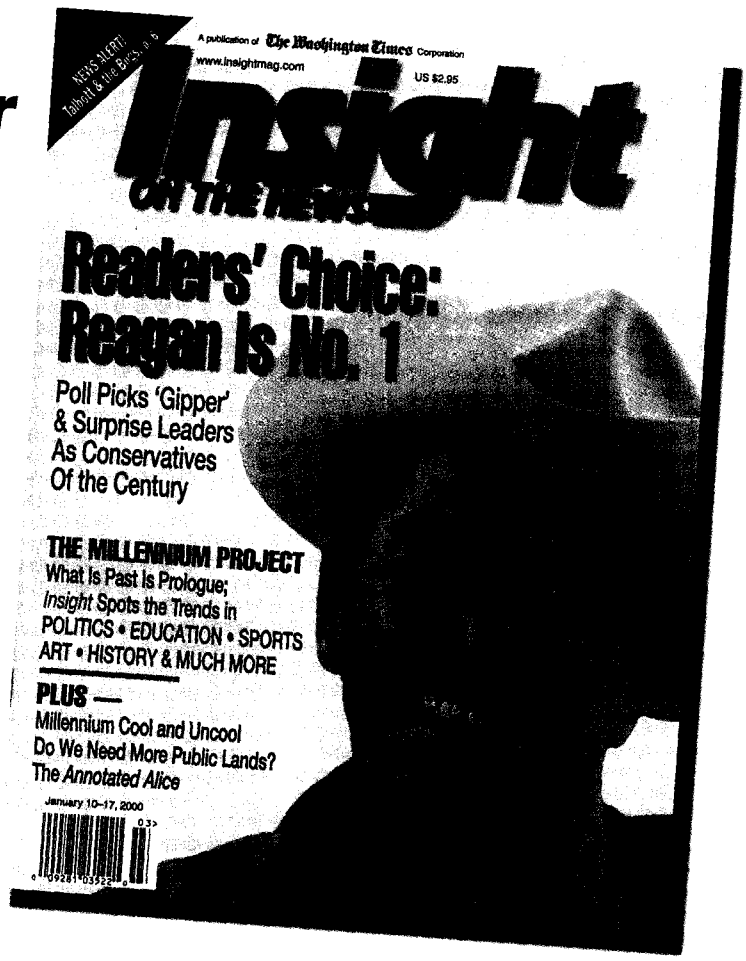
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Disunited Kingdom

JOHN DERBYSHIRE

The Isles: A History, by Norman Davies (Oxford, 1,222 pp., $45)

FORTY years ago, the English comic-song duo of Michael Flanders and Donald Swann produced their "Song of Patriotic Prejudice," a sort of spoof English (as opposed to British) national anthem. After an introductory verse to set the theme—"The rottenest bits of these islands of ours / We've left in the hands of three unfriendly powers . . ."—there followed verses abusing the Welsh, Irish, and Scots, in terms that would nowadays get you prosecuted for hate speech:

The Welshman's dishonest
He cheats when he can
And little and dark,
More like monkey than man . . .

One chorus went: "The English, the English, the English are best / So up with the English and down with the rest!"

At that point in history, with the Irish slumbering in isolation and the rest of the islands still enjoying the afterglow of success in war, the English could afford a little good-natured joking about the peoples with whom they share that brumous North European archipelago. At other times—and the present is one of those other times—relations have been less of an occasion for humor.

In *The Isles*, Norman Davies has set out to present a more organic and inclusive account of British history than the usual English-centered narratives. His focus is on the various arrangements—the cohabitation agreements, as it were—by means of which the peoples of the islands have got along together, or failed to do so. He has taken this approach for a very good reason: He believes that the current constitutional situation in the islands is on the point of breaking down, and that we can best understand what is coming by studying what went before. For added perspective, he gives extensive coverage not only of what happened, but of what various people—historians, novelists, and poets—have *thought* about what happened. *The Isles* therefore includes historiography as well as history, and such other dainties as a poem by Edward II (in medieval French, untranslated) and a four-page extract from Sir Walter Scott's novel *A Legend of Montrose*.

Davies has taken to heart Confucius's observation that you have to get the names of things right before you can say anything intelligent about them. Hence the title of his book. We commonly say "the British Isles"; but this is very inaccurate. The Roman province of Britannia encompassed only the southern part of the larger of the two big islands. There were sorties into the forests of the far north, but no permanent settlement; and the other island, Hibernia, was left alone altogether. The number of the inhabitants of the Isles who have thought of themselves as "British" has never been 100 percent, even during the brief period (1801–1922) when the Isles formed a single nation; it has probably never broken 90. Davies has been similarly fastidious in selecting names for the various sections of his book. He deals with the early Plantagenets, for example, under the heading "The Isles of *Outremer*," to fix in our minds the fact that these were Frenchmen speaking French, who looked on the Isles as overseas possessions.

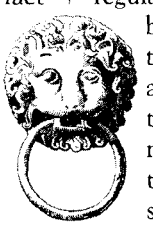
I confess I found this punctilious attention to nomenclature fussy and irritating at first. Seeing King Stephen referred to as "Étienne de Blois" and James II as "James VII, II, and II" (i.e., of Scotland, England, and Ireland respectively), I thought I had strayed into the company of those crabbed fools who want me to refer to Bombay as "Mumbhai" and Gypsies as "Roma." By the 18th century, though, I was starting to see the point, and I set this book down at last feeling sure that I was wiser than when I had picked it up. I had not appreciated, for example, the unifying effect of the Industrial Revolution on the various nations of the Isles. The great coal fields of south Wales fed the steel mills of Yorkshire and Tyneside, which passed their output to the shipyards of Glasgow and Belfast. Now that has all gone, washed away in the great industrial decline of the last half century, and the cohesion of the U.K. is correspondingly weakened. Northern and southern Wales have much more in common now than they had 100 years ago, when the south fueled the Empire (that other defunct common enterprise) while the north stagnated in rustic poverty; more, indeed, than 700 years ago, when the south was controlled by Anglo-French Marcher Lords while the north held out under native princes. As with Wales (and "Davies," I note, is a Welsh name), so with Scotland and even Ireland.

■

All the great pillars of the British state as it was 50 years ago have cracked and split.

■

Nor is it only the U.K. that is in crisis. As Davies demonstrates very convincingly, England herself is facing the need for fundamental change. All the great pillars of the state as it was 50 years ago have cracked and split. The Church of England is now a minority sect, with only 4 percent of the adult population in regular communion. The monarchy has been hollowed out by publicity, by the follies of its younger members, and by its inability to compete with the culture of celebrity. Commercial dynamism and progressive taxation have broken up the class system. Parliament is increasingly bypassed by a politicized judiciary, an executive smooth in the ways of media manipulation, the various supranational bodies of Europe, and a regime of regulation so complex it is understood only by the great army of professional bureaucrats who administer it. The English can no longer even succeed in sports, most of which they invented: At the 1996 Olympics, we got but one gold medal. Poland got seven.



The English do not help their own case. We are surely the most reflective, most diffident people that ever existed.

Mr. Derbyshire is a contributing editor of NATIONAL REVIEW.

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The ideal of English tailoring is that one's suit should not be noticed. These traits have colored all our history. Of the last British Empire, Davies notes that: "All the finest imperialists . . . professed on the one hand a deep love of native cultures and, on the other, a profound moral unease at the implications of unbounded power." Of what other empire can that be said? We have even declined to populate our own throne. The current dynasty is German: Queen Victoria spoke German for preference, and the present Queen's father was the first of his line to marry a non-German (he chose a Scot). The previous dynasty was Scottish; the ones before that Welsh, French, and Scandinavian. England has not had an English monarch for over 900 years; Britain has never had one. Davies notes that Diana Spencer was the first person of English descent ever to approach the British throne, and adds, in an all-too-rare flash of humor: "Her Englishness was one of the few attributes that [were] never held against her."

As a reward to the reader for finishing this rather lengthy book, Davies has added no fewer than 63 appendices, containing a wide variety of material. There are maps, of course, and royal genealogies and tables and statistical charts; but best of all there are patriotic songs from most of the nations of the Isles: "Land of My Fathers," "Scots Wha Hae," "The Wearing of the Green." Even the Protestants of Ulster, to whom Davies is otherwise very unfair, have two entries here: one the Orangeman's favorite, "The Sash My Father Wore," the other "Lilliburlero"—"the song that danced James Stuart out of three kingdoms" (see above), whose tune survives in association with the nursery rhyme "There Was an Old Woman Tossed Up in a Basket." There is, however, no song representing the English.

In *The Isles*, Prof. Davies sometimes irritated me, occasionally angered me, and once bored me (his much-too-detailed account of the 1707 Act of Union with Scotland). He succeeded in enlightening me, though; and my only suggested improvement for future editions of his book is that it include a CD of all those wonderful songs, with Flanders and Swann added to speak for us English. **NR**

■ **MUSIC** ■

One Vote for Willson

JAY NORDLINGER

Is there a Great American Novel? That is a silly conversation. Is there a Great American Musical? That is a less silly one. Obvious candidates include *Oklahoma!*, *Guys and Dolls*, and *Carousel*. But perhaps the strongest contender is *The Music Man*, now in revival on Broadway.

The creator of *The Music Man* was Meredith Willson, a versatile, happy, much-loved figure who died in 1984. His life story is just as American as his show. Born in 1902—"aught two," his characters would say—he grew up in Mason City, Iowa, inspiration for the theatrical "River City, I-o-way." His father was a baker; his great-grandfather had been one of the town's settlers. Of his magnum opus, Willson would say, "I didn't have to make up anything. I simply remembered Mason City as closely as I could."

He was a kid who soaked up everything musical. Any instrument he could get his hands on, he would play. He had the first mail-order flute in town (shades of the Wells Fargo wagon). One of his memoirs—Willson was a marvelously graceful prose writer—is entitled *And There I Stood with My Piccolo*. It is the book on which *The Music Man* is based. When he was 17, Willson struck out for the big city, New York, where he enrolled in the Institute of Musical Art, the forerunner to the Juilliard School (and, as it happens, the alma mater of Richard Rodgers). Meeting up with two of the musical titans of the age, he became flutist for the John Philip Sousa Band and Arturo Toscanini's New York Philharmonic.

He then went to California, to conduct orchestras and work in radio. He composed, arranged, played, conducted—the classic jack-of-all-musical-trades. He worked as music director of Tallulah Bankhead's *Big Show*, for which he wrote the most unBankheadian song "May the Good Lord Bless and Keep You." ("Take a bow, Meredith," the rapacious old siren would say.) He composed scores for such films as *The Great Dictator* and *The Little Foxes*. He wrote a good deal of classical music, including two symphonies. And he was responsible for countless trifles, among them one that made it sort of big—"It's Beginning to Look a Lot like Christmas."

After *The Music Man*, which appeared in 1957, Willson wrote two more musicals: *The Unsinkable Molly Brown* (based on the life of the famed *Titanic* survivor) and *Here's Love* (an adaptation of *Miracle on 34th Street*). After he was rich and famous, he retained the common touch, often returning to Mason City, where he presided over the North Iowa Band Festival. When he died, his widow chose an obvious inscription for his tombstone: "The Music Man." Presi-

■

Meredith Willson had one masterpiece in him, and it will live as long as there is anything like musical theater.

■

dent Reagan conferred on him the Medal of Freedom, posthumously. About 25 years before, President Kennedy had presented him with an award for civic activism (the word had a better connotation then). In 1999, the government issued a stamp in his honor. Willson was not only a talented fellow, but, by every account, an exceptionally good Joe—and this is reflected in his music.

His two symphonies are almost as obscure as his hit show is familiar, but they can be heard on a disc from the Naxos label. The first is subtitled "A Symphony of San Francisco," and it was written in 1936 to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of that city's earthquake. This is an impressive work, of a kind—as good as several of the pieces included in the New York Philharmonic's recent collection of American music. It is a frank example of "program music," telling a story of disaster and subsequent rebirth. It is haunting, imaginative, tuneful, and intelli-

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gently structured. As befits the product of a bandmaster, it makes particularly effective use of the brass and woodwinds. The work has an American robustness, an openness about it. It is also proudly celebratory, if a shade bombastic. And, like most everything that came from Willson's pen, it expresses a striking love of country.

Here is a taste of the explanatory notes that Willson wrote to accompany the piece: "Generally speaking, the first movement is intended to convey pioneer courage, loyalty, strength of purpose and freedom." The trumpet motive in the closing Allegro "is a call of defiance to the very elements themselves that had the temerity to dispute the spiritual strength and courage of the golden city of the West." A little Rotarian, yes—but so what?

The Symphony No. 2, composed immediately after the first, bears the subtitle "The Missions of California," and it is a tribute to Father Junípero Serra, the "padre-pioneer." This work, like its predecessor, is a little bombastic and hokey, but it shows undeniable skill. The slow movement is gorgeously lyrical, a sort of sustained hymn. The scherzo is a pleasant depiction of the return of the swallows to San Juan Capistrano. From beginning to end, there is that distinctive love, and optimism, and gratitude, and joy—strange qualities for the 20th century. The pops conductor Arthur Fiedler used to speak of "first-rate second-rate music." The Willson symphonies may be described this way.

Furthermore, Willson shows both a knack and an affection for all types of music and musical devices. Thus, in the Serra symphony, he throws in elements of Gregorian chant. At the end of "Gary, Indiana," there is a little jig, for the Irish Mrs. Paroo to dance to. This is charming, sure—but it is also fine craftsmanship.

Willson had one masterpiece in him, and it will live as long as there is anything like musical theater. *The Music Man* (for which Willson also wrote the lyrics) is an astonishing creation. It came in a spurt of brilliance. It is shot through with originality, verve, and—why not go all the way?—genius. People love it, can't get enough of it, can't stop performing it—and they are not wrong. For closing in on a half-century now, *The Music Man* has been performed continually, in every American city, town, and village, and in other parts of the world as well, not excluding Peking.

How American is it? Totally, almost lustily. The show is set in 1912, five years before America's entry into the world war, a relatively innocent time. The place is Iowa, a very American state in a very American region. The show expresses not only love of country, but, more particularly, love of American music, as epitomized by the marching band. Carl King, who along with Sousa is the very idea of a band composer, was an Iowan. And Willson's "Seventy-six Trombones" is probably the last march to enter the permanent repertory.

Photofest

The unsinkable Meredith Willson, in 1942

The show begins with "Rock Island"—"Whaddya talk! Whaddya talk!"—which is a proto-rap. It is pure joy in rhythm and words, dazzlingly brought off. We continue with "Iowa Stubborn," sung by the people of River City. In the current Broadway production, two of them are made to look like the pair in Grant Wood's *American Gothic*. (Wood, of course, was another Iowan.) *The Music Man* is sometimes charged with being corny, but it is in reality anti-corny. Willson ribs his home folks, but gently, lovingly. Here is "Professor Harold Hill," the con man from back East, trying to frighten the community about the well-being of its children: "Are certain words creeping into [their] vocabulary? Words like . . . like 'swell'? Aha! And, 'So's your old man'!" The show has a broad liberality, as in its anti-censorship theme ("Chaucer, Rab-eh-laze, *Bal*-zac!"). It is warmly patriotic, and yet it has a little fun with the dumber sort of patriotism: "Remember the *Maine*, Plymouth Rock, and the Golden Rule!" It also has a dose of raciness, as when Professor Hill, in "The Sadder but Wiser Girl," confesses, "I hope and I pray for Hester to win just one more *A*!"

At every turn, music is exalted—in the piano teacher, the little girl taking lessons, the barbershop quartet, the evocation of the great composers, and, at the center of it all, the excitement over the coming boys' band. Professor Hill even issues the old (but false) bromide that singing is nothing more than "sustained speech." Willson sprinkles his score with jazz, ragtime, burlesque—the whole of our musical grab bag.

And there is hardly a shallow or pedestrian note. Willson puts on a clinic of melody, harmony, modulation, and rhythm (including "elegant syncopation"). "Pick a Little, Talk a Little" is a novelty number, but a novelty number of very high quality, especially as it merges with the barbershop quartet's "Good Night, Ladies." The slinky "Marian the Librarian" has that little chromatic motive that is one of the glories of the literature, instantly recognizable to just about all sentient Americans. "Shipoopi" is a ridiculous song—but then, it is meant to be.

By the final curtain—this would kill Sinclair Lewis—the big-city slickster is won over by the homely River Citians (but primarily, to be sure, by the fair Marian). He wants to become one of them, live among them, be absorbed in their goodness. Babbitt has a pretty fine life, and we know it. In the current revival, as if to drive home the Americanness of it all, the performance ends with the dropping of an enormous, *Patton*-sized flag. There will always be those who sniff that the show is "feel good"—but, oh, it feels good to feel good. And the main reason *The Music Man* feels so good is that it *is* good—a great American musical.

So, is it *the*? This is just a parlor game. No need for a ruckus. But here is one vote for Willson. **NR**

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■ ART ■

Ink-Stained Wretches

JAMES GARDNER

MOST of us view the human body as a rental rather than a condo: We have the use of it during the brief season of our tenancy, but we are loath to initiate any permanent modifications beyond those dictated by nature and medical necessity. Which is to say that we have no intention of getting ourselves pierced, scarified, or tattooed if we can possibly help it.

But if this is the majority opinion, the majority is shrinking every day. By treating the current fad for piercings and tattoos, a new exhibition at the American Museum of Natural History in Manhattan addresses a cultural phenomenon that can no longer be ignored. It concerns the first frontier of primitive cultures and the last frontier of our own, the human body itself. Near the entrance to *Body Art: Marks of Identity* stands an Athenian red-figure vase portraying a tattooed Thracian, a barbarian living at the fringes of the known world. For over 2,000 years, this was about as close as our society came to body art. Surely hair styles and clothes, those vain "lendings" that Lear flung off in his madness, were subject to infinite variation. And surely pirates, lowlifes, and drunken sailors might submit themselves to some form of corporeal revision. But for nice people, the body remained an undiscovered country, far beyond the reach of human artifice.

In most other societies, however, the body was the first thing to be called into question. From China to Peru, the irksome fixities of inherited form were relentlessly challenged, until living tissue came to be viewed as a kind of canvas to be adorned, a clay to be sculpted and carved. *Body Art* presents us with images of Inca princes with conical skulls and Nuba warriors whose bodies are painted to a supernatural sheen. Dozens of tiny shoes, which once shod the bound feet of well-born Chinese women, are set near pendulous weights that hung from the elongated ears of the Zapotec Indians of Mexico. More appalling are the ritualized scarifications of the Papuans of New Guinea, whose bodies teem with hardened masses of patterned welts.

Ethnology aside, the real thrust of the show is the recent and faddish introduction of tattoos and piercings into the mainstream of modern industrial society. In tracing the history of tattoos in the West, the curators have included reproductions of the watercolors of John White, one of the first Englishmen to visit the New World, depicting the natives of Virginia, their fronts and backs marred with mysterious symbols. We learn as well of such 19th-century characters as Edith the Tattooed Lady

■

Tattoos have passed from bohemia and the inner city into our elite college campuses, only to end up in suburbia.

■

Mr. Gardner is art critic of the *New York Post*.

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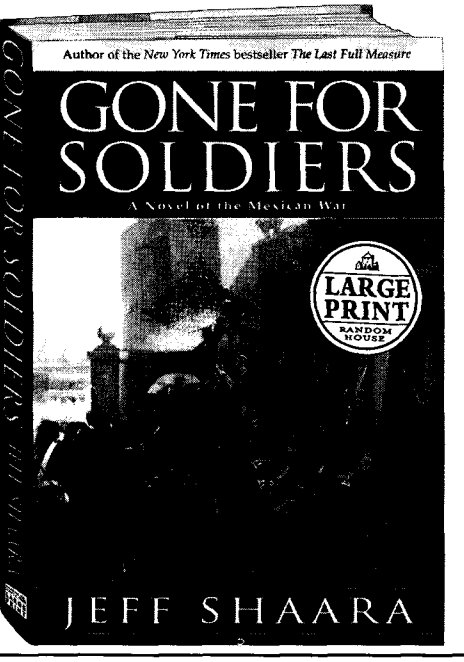
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and Mildred, "New York's Only Lady Tattooer." Nearby are the tools of her trade, contraptions with spikes and cranks and knobs that look for all the world like the implements of medieval penitence.

Now that tattooing, like everything else, has become computerized, it is a little more highbrow than in the past. True, most customers still choose hoary standards like the Blessed Virgin, the bulldog, and the rose. But one woman featured in *Body Art*, naked except for her turban, has adorned her back with a reproduction of Joan Miró. A young man has opted for Boldini's portrait of Verdi, while another has chosen to cover his entire body, including his shaved head, in the patterns of a jig-saw puzzle. No one, however, does it better than the Japanese, though they have only relatively recently imported tattoos from the West. Whereas Occidental tattoos are mostly isolated images placed here and there on the skin, in Japan they have a much more organic relation to the human form, their dizzily swirling dragons and vines exploding across the body like fragments of a shattered kaleidoscope.

How did it happen that this interest in piercings and tattoos has made its way from the fringes of society to the center, or very near it? It is a question that does not greatly interest the curators of the exhibition. The closest they come to an explanation is pure '90s boilerplate. "Body art allows people to reinvent themselves as rebels," the opening panel informs us, "to follow fashions, to play and experiment with new identities. Like performance artists and actors, people in everyday life use body art to cross boundaries of gender, national identity, and cultural stereotypes."

Of course, there is more to it than that. As with any cultural current, even the simplest, this new taste is a composite of heartfelt convictions and half-formed ideas. It engages that spirit of nonconformity, real or feigned, that has been lodged in our collective semi-consciousness since the '60s. Both the biker who covers his body with skulls and the coed who chooses a rose for her ankle or a ring for her lip believe that they are engaging in acts of nonconformity. "I knew that my mother would hate it," one polite young woman remarks, by way of motive, in a taped interview for the exhibit. Her attitude is in curious contrast to that of the inhabitants of New Guinea, Amazonia, and Sudan, where such practices originated and where, invariably, they represent the most entrenched conformity to inherited cultural patterns.

William DeMichele

Husband and wife performance artists The Enigma (him) and Katzen (her), now on view at the American Museum of Natural History in New York

In part, tattoos reflect that convergence of high and low culture that defines much of postmodern society. This convergence expresses itself in everything from the graffiti art of Jean-Michel Basquiat to the casual clothes donned in the boardrooms of Silicon Valley. By wearing a tattoo, by co-opting the insignia of popular culture, even outlaw culture, one seems to embrace the person at the fringes of society. The process of assimilation is an interesting one. The glamorous world of high fashion and high culture dips into the "colorful" world of the fringes, and five years later these borrowings filter down into the middle class, where they eventually expire. Put another way, piercings and tattoos have passed from bohemia and the inner city into our elite college campuses, only to end up in suburbia.

■

The very fact that something is a cultural given is sufficient to make it an object of suspicion and a target of radical revision.

■

Perhaps the best explanation of the new fashion is contained in two tiny questions that go to the heart of postmodern society: Why not? and What if? From electronic books to virtual reality, from online universities and same-sex marriages to cloning and S&M, the spirit of the age expresses itself in a restive and reflexive calling into question of all things. The very fact that something is a cultural given, that it has been established for as long as men can remember, is sufficient to make it an object of suspicion and a target of radical revision. Part of what drives the taste for tattoos is the collective awakening to the fact that the body, which Western society has traditionally viewed as inviolable, as the most fixed of all things, can indeed be altered by conscious art. In this sense, body art, like cosmetic surgery, is the flashy epidermal counterpart to pace-makers and a whole generation of cloned and bionic parts that, science assures us, lies just around the corner.

One cannot say how long the taste for piercings and tattoos will last. What is certain is that, with the promise of ever-longer life spans, a whole generation in its teens and twenties will have many years to reflect on, and perhaps to repent of, these all-too-permanent whims of their youth. **NR**

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■ CITY DESK ■

All Ye Who Enter

RICHARD BROOKHISER

TWO of the main ground-transportation routes into New York have a stressed look, like rubber doormats that read WEI OMF.

Pennsylvania Station has a fundamental design problem. Because many of its tracks come from the west, they must be sunk below the bottom of the Hudson River. As a result the station platforms are unusually deep, reachable only by steep staircases or escalators. The disembarking travelers struggle up like trolls in the Hall of the Mountain King. Before my time, they were rewarded by an airy McKim, Mead, and White terminal, modeled on the Baths of Caracalla. Nothing of that now remains but a couple of stone eagles and a statue of a president of the Pennsylvania Railroad, clasping a bronze fedora. The latest incarnation of Madison Square Garden squats on the site, with the terminal below it. Rail passengers must come and go in a mean underground arcade, so that thuggish millionaires may palm the ball and travel with impunity.

The Port Authority Bus Terminal was for many years even worse. The disparity reflected the difference in class between train and bus riders. Trains are the prisons of commuters, and the obsession of hobbyists. Buses are the transportation of the poor. As is so often the case in compassionate societies, the poor were insulted by being forced to endure the antics of the very poor. I once saw a decades-old documentary on drag queens. The closing shot showed the winner of a drag beauty contest, waiting at the Port Authority for his bus home. He sat on his suitcase, holding his prize, a cheap tinsel crown. The filmmakers wanted us to think, "How tawdry, how touching." What any New Yorker of the '80s or early '90s thought was, "No bums! No mad whores! The Port Authority looks great!" Indeed, it had fallen on hard times. Bum families lived in its restrooms. Demented folk, stinking and raving, padded about with bare swollen feet. Bad enough that you were coming from Poughkeepsie. How much worse that you had to arrive at a place like this.

■

New York's Pennsylvania Station and Port Authority have found a new use for Bach: crowd control.

■

In Giuliani Time, both places took a

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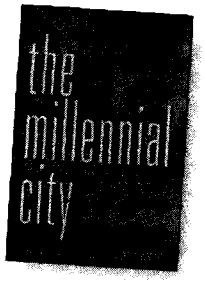

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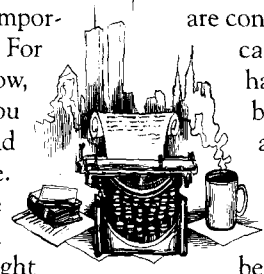
turn for the better. Penn Station has built a waiting area for Metroliner ticketholders. The look of it—futurism of the past—makes you think of the bridge of the starship *Enterprise*. The Port Authority was given a makeover too. The ugliness of the building makes beauty impossible, but at least it is now clean and trim. More important, the laws are enforced. For seats, there are high, narrow, spring-mounted slats that you must fold down for a perch and that pop up as soon as you rise. Only a Giacometti figure would feel comfortable in them, but they make overnight stays impossible.



The two terminals have one thing in common: classical music. After you ride into the Port Authority's garage, where the buses nuzzle each other like blind cave creatures and pigeons skim through the exhaust like bats, once you emerge into the relative cleanliness of the terminal, you are greeted by violins. In Penn Station, as you leave rush-hour madness on Seventh Avenue to clatter downstairs on staccato heels, bound for New Jersey, there to herald you are piccolo trumpets. It's lively and bright; even when you expect it, it comes as a surprise; it's like having sparkling water poured into your ears. The selections range from Vivaldi to Haydn, all instrumental, very little dark or chromatic, a great stretch of white, C-major music. Brahms would be too insistent, Josquin too ethereal. I experienced in myself a similar constriction of range when I was undergoing chemotherapy. Anything that had voices or a trace of appassionato made me recoil, as from forced intimacy. In the midst of my business I don't want to think, pray, or brood; I want my spirit to tap its toe.

The music has another purpose besides refreshment. It is just loud enough to discourage sleeping, and it is remote enough from the pop sensibility to discomfit loiterers. From time to time science announces that dolphins prefer Mozart to rock. Urban youths prefer hip-hop to Gluck. Thirty years after Bill Buckley defended Johann Sebastian Bach against some young man who had called him an "old dead punk," we have found a use for the bewigged Lutheran: crowd control.

So much for the side doors. New York's front door is Grand Central Terminal. This is a railroad station so commodious and gradual that you may walk from your platform to the street without once encountering a step. At the navel of the main hall is a tiny gold clock, like a giant's toy; on the ceiling are constellations, attended by zodiacal figures. Beyond the great hall is a lesser one, which would be a handsome terminal for any city the size of Cleveland. The reduction of scale is deliberate, like bringing a diver up slowly to avoid the bends. Outside, on 42nd Street, rushing New Yorkers use intra-urban ground transport, the abused foot. Behind you floats Mercury, god of commerce and thieves; over your left shoulder is the Chrysler Building, icon of modernity. "Every new scene," wrote Alexander Hamilton, "which is opened to the busy nature of man to rouse and exert itself, is the addition of a new energy to the general stock of effort." The little Caribbean got that right. Welcome—and get to work. **NR**

■ FILM ■

What, No Orgy?

JOHN SIMON

By one of fate's sardonic ironies, the very week that brought the demise of Steve Reeves, the body-builder actor whose *Hercules* initiated the popularity of sword-and-sandal (or blood-and-sand) epics, also produced the opening of Ridley Scott's **Gladiator**, the first such film in many a lustrum, the public's blood lust having switched to more up-to-date genres. Although Anthony Mann's *Fall of the Roman Empire* (1964) covered some of the same ground—so much so that it has, unfairly, been removed from video stores—*Gladiator* is bigger, costlier, and beastlier.

It begins A.D. 180, at the end of Marcus Aurelius's rule, with the emper-

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or fighting the barbarians in what, with touching classicism, is referred to as Germania. Commanding the SPQR forces is a fictitious general, Maximus, whose name the screenwriters—David Franzoni, John Logan, and William Nicholson—most likely plucked out of Marcus Aurelius's famous *Meditations*, where the itinerant lecturer Maximus is mentioned as a mentor. A Maximus, to be sure, very different from the grim and growling warrior whom Russell Crowe portrays with unyielding prowess and unsmiling probity, but who, we read, likewise "thought as he spoke," though perhaps not with an Australian accent.

Aided by only minor anachronisms, Maximus defeats the antique Krauts, hairier than the worst hippies, in grandiose nocturnal battle sequences, the forest battleground crisscrossed by somewhat unlikely but wildly photogenic flaming arrows. As a reward, Marcus—played by Richard Harris as only a hair or two less hirsute than the furibund Teutons and about as Roman as Monty Python—picks him as his heir. This naturally angers the heir apparent, Commodus, who, with his sister, Lucilla, has kept well to the rear of the fighting. He promptly throttles his father and dispatches a few trusties to decapitate Maximus, who, however, proves too agile for them and instead cooks their goose, or geese.

Just how he does this is hard to tell, because Scott's chief technique through much of the film is lightning-fast cutting, so that chopped-off limbs, severed heads, gushing blood, etc., fly by so quickly that you can't be sure of what you saw, or whether indeed you saw it—a reasonably good tactic for assuaging the censor while titillating the audience. After a while I found this irritating, because pruned or manicured bestiality has a way of looking more insinuatingly nasty than outright brutishness.

While Commodus enters Rome in ill-gained triumph, Maximus rides himself to a frazzle back to his farm in Spain, but finds that Commodus's men have already done in his wife and little boy by a mélange of rape, burning, and crucifixion. During his swoon of grief, he is apprehended by some slave traders, who trundle him off to an exotic North African location and school for gladiators. It is owned by Proximo, a freed ex-gladiator—juicily played by the grizzled veteran Oliver Reed—who now trades in such *morituri*. Reed died during the filming, thus depriving us of a few more much-needed comic moments. Maximus's favorite fellow student at gladiatorial school is a black giant, Juba (Djimon Hounsou), with whom the equally but differently pious ex-general exchanges views of the afterlife and hopes of a reunion with his slain family that should be of interest to all comparative religionists.

Ridley Scott's lightning-fast cutting is a good tactic for assuaging the censor while titillating the audience.

Before long, Maximus, Juba, and their colorful colleagues are in the Colosseum, which computer imaging has turned into the awesome eighth wonder of the world. Computer graphics, moreover, have restored the glory that was Rome into a triumph of virtuality, which, as we know, is its own reward. For the plot makes scant sense, least of all a previous love affair between Maximus and Lucilla, who now tries to help him organize a gladiator rebellion (shades of *Spartacus*). We see one chaste kiss between Lucilla (the charming Danish actress Connie Nielsen) and our hero, who remains faithful to his dead wife. But there are plentiful histrionics from Joaquin Phoenix as a Commodus part effete homosexual, part incestuous lecher planning to marry his sister.

Historical truth is once lightly brushed against, in that Commodus did actually fight gladiators, though these knew better than to win against him. Here everything culminates in a circus duel to the death between him and Maximus, as tricky surprises pile up toward the film's end. But Ridley Scott (of *Alien* and *Blade Runner* fame) is too much in love with effects to be an effective director. We do get, however, two-and-a-half laughable hours of lavish

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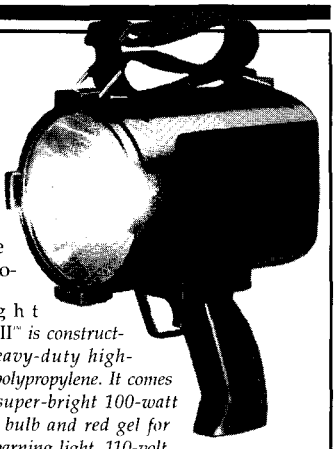

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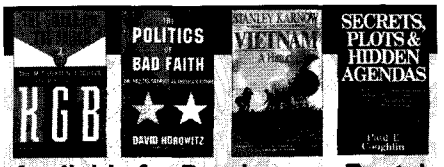

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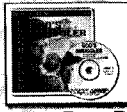

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hokum, a word of obscure origin, perhaps derived from a late Latin term signifying "hundred-million-dollar Hollywood rubbish."

■ ***Where the Heart Is*** is where credibility comes even harder. In this dreadfully cute movie, weirdness is supposed to supply some reality. An inept epigone of Southern Gothic, it is based on a novel, an Oprah's Book Club selection by Billie Letts. The heroine is 17-year-old pregnant Novalee Nation, who leaves a miserable Tennessee existence for California with her brutish boyfriend Willy Jack in a jalopy that once was a Plymouth. In a small Oklahoma town, Novalee gets out to use the Wal-Mart bathroom; returning, she finds only her Polaroid camera in the empty parking space.

What is a girl to do? She moves clandestinely into the Wal-Mart for the six weeks until the baby girl comes. Her midwife? Forney, her brainy but bashful librarian friend, who mostly takes care of his sickly sister, but now crashes through a thick plate-glass window to come to Novalee's aid. In reality, he would have needed more medical assistance than he could give.

After being cheated out of her remaining money by her pop-up mother, Novalee and her now famous Wal-Mart baby move in with a kindly woman named Sister Husband (though she is neither) and her brood of bastard children, each named after a dessert snack. She also befriends Lexie, a young woman with a huge, optimistic appetite for life, even though she keeps choosing abusive lovers. These two provide Novalee with a surrogate mother and sister. A wise black photographer, Moses Whitecotten, guides Novalee and her Polaroid toward a career in photography.

I shall not burden you with further details, some cutely horrific, others cutely cutesy, like the name of Novalee's baby girl, Americus, which goes so sweetly with the last name, Nation. After many cute disasters, we get a much-delayed happy ending; script by Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel, direction by Matt Williams. Such good actresses as Natalie Portman, Ashley Judd, Stockard Channing, and Joan Cusack are wasted on this clumsily feminist movie, which makes sisterhood beautiful and filmmaking loathsome.

■ In ***I Dreamed of Africa***, Kim Basinger plays an Italian woman—preposterous enough even if she weren't named Kuki—who with her husband and young son starts a new life on an African farm. Sometimes banal and boring, sometimes would-be rousing and bathetic, this poorly written film is based on the memoirs of Kuki Gallmann, and fitfully directed by Hugh Hudson. In many ways, but not in quality, resembling *Out of Africa*, it was strepitously bruited to elevate Basinger to Streepdom. Instead, it reveals her pathetic limitations: histrionic, vocal, and by now, alas, also visual. But cinematographically, as shot by Bernard Lutic, the vistas and wildlife provide a feast for the eye, unless you choke on the other stuff. **NR**

■ BOOKS IN BRIEF ■

How Now Shall We Live?, by Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey (Tyndale, 574 pp., $22.99)

I HAVE elsewhere noted that Charles Colson is a truly admirable figure on the contemporary scene, this of course because of his resonant rehabilitation after the Watergate business. But mostly one needs to acknowledge his work as the founder of Prison Fellowship Ministries and his written work. A dozen years ago I named his then-current book as the most engrossing I had read that year. Now (belatedly), I have read *How Now Shall We Live?*, which he wrote in partnership with Nancy Pearcey. The singular pleasure that comes from it is its absolute—learned—refusal to give any quarter to the dogged materialists who deny any possibility that there was a creator around the corner. This is a substantial book, but the reader never tires, as one might from a catechistic marathon. The arguments are cogently and readably presented, the whole of the book buoyed by the liberating conviction that we are all here by divine mandate, leaving this reader with the conviction that the authors of this book are prominent in the display of what we have to be grateful for. —WFB

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

The King Is Dead

NEW YORK, APRIL 7

THE new president was greeted with two standing ovations, and that doesn't regularly happen, students often electing to be oafish, or blasé, or indifferent. There were two reasons for the ebullience at Hillsdale College. One of them was the bearded solemnity of the successor-king, which combined with a bounce in speech and manner that traces to youthful energy, as also to a serenity of convictions. These Larry P. Arnn has honed as a cosmopolitan scholar and as head of the Claremont Institute, a conservative think tank that has taken on bare-bones political challenges in full academic regalia.

That's one reason, the other that President Arnn is stepping into a haunted office. It is cheerfully anticipated that the exorcisms will quickly follow. Indeed, in his very first press conference, President Arnn seemed to say that he had flicked off such crabby webs as had clung to the office.

"George is gone," he said—referring to his mythogenic predecessor, president of Hillsdale for 28 years, creator of the Hillsdale nationally acknowledged for its academic accomplishments and the enthusiasm of its following—"and people are ready for that to be over." He went on to say that there would be no continuing college probe of George Roche III because "he no longer works for Hillsdale." "Something went terribly wrong," Arnn acknowledged—exactly what, it isn't known. "But this board took very quick action on the matter."

On the full-disclosure front, I accepted an invitation to serve on the search committee for Hillsdale's new president when Mr. Roche was retired. My duties were formalistic. When told that Larry Arnn was a contender I muted my personal enthusiasm for an old friend and comrade in arms, and when told that he was the committee's choice, I added my vote happily, confident that the new figure has the personal strength to cast his own shadow, which means, necessarily, to repel that of his protean predecessor.

I was the speaker when Mr. Roche was inaugurated as president in 1971, and I held forth confidently on his plans for the small Michigan college. Those plans he realized, lifting the student SAT scores, attracting competent scholars, enlarging the curriculum, generating an esprit de corps that brought hundreds of millions of dollars from an animated body of alumni and friends.

In a matter of weeks, last fall, the House of Roche crumbled. Divorce, remarriage, separation, reunification, a charge of incestuous infidelity, a suicide, resignation. Roche retreated to a corner of Colorado and sent out a form letter, affirming his innocence and avowing "the overwhelming reality of Christ's presence in my life." In a handwritten note, he added on my copy of the letter, "Thank you for your support . . . As for me, I've come home to my mountains and will be hard to dislodge."

Roche's old confederates are firm in their decision reached during the crisis in November not to condemn him officially, lacking anything more to move on than the jeremiad of a young woman who a few hours later committed suicide. But neither is there any appetite to prolong an investigation of the personal life of the legendary president. The mood at Hillsdale is that no effort whatever will be made to dislodge George Roche III from his mountains.

Larry Arnn has been busy and successful for 15 years as the director of an institute that has regularly distributed news analyses, seeking to interpret current events in the light of its freedom-seeking goals. Arnn played a major role in devising Proposition 209 in California, which forbids affirmative action by race preferences. He understands the need to reanimate, at Hillsdale, a faltering comradeship among fellow communicants of the Hillsdale experience. Among other things, he plans to meet at lunch or dinner 20 students weekly.

Ruminating over five months' work, William Brodbeck, in charge of the committee to find a new president, commented that searches of this nature are more regularly turned over to professional agencies. At Hillsdale the decision was to do it on their own. The committee is pleased and confident. Arnn's aim is the renewal of a brainy and exuberant small campus that never lost its steam when the explosion happened, but has acknowledged the hunger for revitalization, which is now exuberantly in hand.

"I always feel better when Congress adjourns—now, if we could only get the president to adjourn. . . ."

In Pursuit of AIDS In Africa

NEW YORK, MAY 5

THE sequence is as follows: The White House reiterates a months-old finding that the AIDS epidemic in Africa is a development that impinges on the national security.

Sen. Trent Lott disputes the terminology—what is the nexus between an epidemic abroad and national security?

Secretary of State Albright grabs the microphone to insist that we are indeed talking about the national security, Sen. Lott is variously condemned for insensitivity, and national security adviser Sandy Berger defends the White House by contending that anything that brings on death on the scale brought on by the AIDS epidemic is "destabilizing," and for that reason, a threat to the national security.

In the *Washington Times*, columnist Bruce Fein summed it up nicely by commenting that "if everything is a national security problem, then nothing is." And added that Secretary Albright had "neglected to note that chronic convulsions, tyranny, corruption, civil insurrections, tribal, ethnic, and religious enmities, war, and human-rights violations have been the soundtracks of Africa since decolonization commenced in 1957, decades before AIDS appeared on the dismal scene."

The trouble with such rhetorical opportunism, as is practiced by Clinton et al., is that analytical scrutiny is impaired. Mr. Clinton wants $254 million to help fight AIDS overseas. He finds it convenient to adduce the national security as the stake America has in the AIDS menace, and this ends

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as an invitation to cynicism. Mr. Fein is correct: If national security is at stake, then so is it jeopardized by a fallen sparrow. The problem activist humanitarians have is: What can be done about the African situation? Eleven million have died of AIDS in Africa and 23 million are H.I.V. infected.

Thoughtful medical analysts tell us sobering things. The first of these, of course, is that those who are infected will die. Dr. Frank Bia of the Yale Medical School, an authority on the subject, stresses the need to take the long view. In Africa there is a remarkable coincidence in areas in which AIDS has hit hardest and malaria continues to be menacing. The connection? Those made anemic by malaria are given blood. That blood, because of a grossly inadequate blood-banking system, is infected. Therefore, those who suffer from malaria are likelier than others to end by dying from AIDS. We know how to combat malaria—we did this for ourselves 100 years ago. Ergo? Antimalarial measures will diminish AIDS infection.

A person in Zimbabwe engaging in sex has a 35 percent chance of intercourse with an H.I.V.-positive partner. Even as malaria augments the likelihood of exposure, so also do sexually related debilities. Genital herpes increases the likelihood of infection. So? Campaign against sexual diseases of every character.

We come then, Dr. Bia persuasively concludes, to the condom factor. In Africa, men are generally indisposed to use a condom, and women are compliant. "But every act of sexual intercourse is, in almost every situation, negotiated." The woman who understands that the failure to insist on the condom is "to play Russian roulette" will help to stimulate a culture in which the transmission of AIDS is practically diminished.

There is a special problem that affects the fight against AIDS in Africa. It is the general impatience of the American society, which is achievement-oriented. We want to *stop* AIDS and we can't do it. If President Clinton asked not for $254 million but for $254 billion—if he succeeded in persuading the American people to take on AIDS as a Manhattan Project—what then would we need?

Recruit an army of missionaries. This is not a Pentagon project, never mind the cant about national security being involved. The challenge is to the humanitarian resources of those who have learned what it is that needs to be done. Mobilize the Salvation Army to send people to Africa to preach the need for condoms? Yes, actually. That and cleaning up the blood banks, attacking malaria, educating men and women on sexual activity—such are the rational roads ahead for those moved to humanitarian intervention. The crusade is not encouraged by scare words about national security. And it is sobering to reflect on other basic lessons which we haven't succeeded in communicating widely to African society. Zimbabwe suffers from plagues unrelated to AIDS.

Is It True, Mr. Mayor . . .

NEW YORK, MAY 9

THE New York City press is full of news and commentary about the other lady, and comment on the subject is heard coast to coast. Mayor Rudy Giuliani faced the whole thing directly, as he tends to do, in a television interview. The brusqueness of his manner was marked. This is a Giuliani characteristic which goes with his legendary decisiveness. But the problem today has to do with the incompleteness of his answer. To say something decisively is not necessarily to close the subject.

The question was: Is it true, Mr. Mayor, that there is another woman in your life?

What the mayor answered sounds utterly convincing. He said, Look, I can understand curiosity about me. By going into public life, I invited that kind of scrutiny. But the woman—yes, I have had dinner a few times with another woman—the woman I have been seeing did *not* choose a public life. So she deserves to be left absolutely alone.

What's wrong with that?

Quite simply this, that if there is curiosity about a public figure, that curiosity reasonably extends to the public figure's extracurricular life. That does not mean the curiosity should be gratified. But curiosity can't be quenched by insisting that it ought not to have been ignited. If Mayor Giuliani correctly says that a public figure must expect scrutiny, it is unrealistic to go on to say that the company he keeps isn't going to attract attention.

There are two directions to go in, in exploring the question. One way, which can be rejected as prurient, is to insist that the private life of a public figure is a public matter. At one extreme this would obviously be true. If Bluebeard were elected mayor, he couldn't get away with saying that his private life was all his own business. The care that is taken by presidential figures to reassure the public on this whole aspect is a matter of history. President Buchanan was a bachelor, but almost 100 years went by before a credible candidate announced for the presidential office who did not have a wife at his side. Adlai Stevenson was divorced. Shortly before he announced his candidacy (I learned this from a witness), he called his former wife, instructing her to have his sons waiting at the Episcopal service the following Sunday at eleven. This confused the mother, who, however, quickly got the message: the need for national candidates to beguile those voters who are not indifferent to whether the public man observes the Sabbath.

In an entirely different direction one might say: It is *inconceivable* that anyone should feel it legitimate to ask about a public figure's private life, let alone expect his questions to be answered. If the taboo were rigid, questions by the press would arise infrequently, if at all. Prof. Bernard DeVoto of Harvard, who was an actively engaged political figure (he wrote speeches for Adlai Stevenson), was once asked during the McCarthy period, "Mr. DeVoto, are you a Communist?" He answered: "Are you an adulterer?" Not, really, related to the question asked, but the questioner got wind of how any conversation on that order would go with Bernard DeVoto.

It's a pity that the whole question is dismissed with the conventional caricature, "The press has no business in any candidate's bedroom."

Well, the press isn't necessarily asking for closed-television access into a public figure's bedroom when it asks such a question as was asked of Mayor Giuliani. The answer to the question, Are you separated from your wife? is, in Mr. Giuliani's case, Yes, though the first lady still dwells in Gracie Mansion. The questioner is prying into the question whether the mayor is difficult to live with.

The voters who may be asked to send Mr. Giuliani to the Senate aren't being asked to live with him. But manifestly people are interested in that line of questioning. There is no other reason that the New York tabloids should be so talkative on the subject. And if one were to outlaw any news except of the kind that appeases the appetite for information about public policy, there wouldn't be so much to read about every day.

—UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

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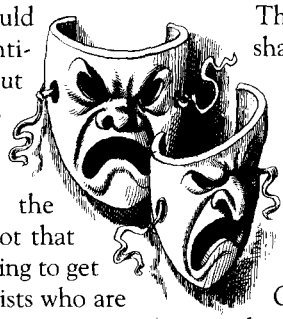
■ THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER ■

FLORENCE KING

WELCOME to *The Eliad: Book II*. The dolphin-gathering hero from the wine-dark sea cavorts now at Wye of the bigger backyard, guarded by picture-taking Greg Craig of the rhyming name.

I didn't intend to write about Elián again, and certainly not twice in a row. Since my last column was about my refusal to write about him at all, I was relieved when the INS packed him up and took him away. I thought his removal from Miami would spell *finis*, or at least anti-climax, to the whole affair, but the aftermath of what is now being called "The Raid" has stirred my juices.



The conventions of the Homeric epic demand a plot that pits a protagonist who is trying to get back home against antagonists who are trying to stop him. The antagonists must be outlandish enough to stick in the mind to ensure their place in crossword puzzles thousands of years hence when the epic is still being read by civilized people everywhere. *The Eliad* is certain to endure because its antagonists are the Cyclopses of the Sledgehammer Right.

I have had it with hysterical conservatives. To hear some of them tell it, "The Raid" was the equivalent of the sack of Rome. They went ballistic over "The Picture" showing one of "Janet Reno's jack-booted thugs" pointing what was variously described as a rifle, an Uzi, or a machine gun at the "head [heart, chest, face, throat] of a six-year-old." If you don't believe it, look at "The Picture." I did, and it distinctly shows the agent holding the gun at an angle away from the closet.

This scenario was rehashed in scores of rabid letters to the editor, but the most unsettling was a frenzied screed in the *Washington Times* about "the wicked, smiling face of the INS agent clutching a terrified and screaming Elián. . . ." I looked at this picture too, and it's obvious that the woman is *grimacing*—as well she might.

I regret to say that the editor-in-chief of the *Washington Times* went his correspondents one better. In his column about a probable secret deal between Clinton and Castro, Wesley Pruden wrote: "Mr. Clinton, who would sacrifice his own child's freedom if political expediency demanded it . . ." He follows this incredible statement with a parenthetical comparison: "(just as he sacrificed his own child's peace of mind for his cheap sexual gratification over the years). . . ."

These unfortunate words mark a sharp departure from the Right's treatment of Chelsea. Ever since she flowered into an appealing young woman, conservatives have gone out of their way to praise her as the Clintons' only achievement. Even the most virulent Clinton-hater readily admitted that Bonnie and Clod, as Pruden calls them, did one thing right. Now, fair play is out and Chelsea has been subjected to a stupid comment that is more shattering than any account of her father's sex life could be.

The seizure of Elián was just what the NRA deserved. Talk-radio conservatives brayed that "The Picture" would be an ideal ad for the group, but in fact it belies the blizzard of patriotic alerts America's most tireless junk mailer sends out. They urge their members to think of themselves as latter-day Minutemen exercising their Second Amendment right to open fire on a would-be dictator's secret police, but one look at "The Picture" restores reality. The NRA's vision of armed citizens prevailing against a modern tyrannical government is a romantic fantasy, and I'd rather know it than dream on.

In view of this, "The Raid" should disturb me, but it doesn't. In the first place, I am getting impatient with the hatred of government of some on the right. In the second place, I have been fed up with dithering ever since Jimmy Carter spent 444 days on the Iranian hostages. This time we got it right, and I could not help being impressed at seeing an adroit, no-nonsense show of strength for a change.

I also saw that without the Cold War, some conservatives have nothing to be conservative about. Abortion doesn't really do it for them, perhaps because it takes place in the female pelvis, nor do the family values they were so quick to put aside in favor of separating father and son. But fighting Communism takes them back to a time when there were no women's issues to speak of and no soccer moms to speak to. The Cold War was their raison d'être and *The Eliad* exposed their subconscious wish that the USSR will rise again.

Nobody can be a scapegoat as long as Janet Reno without garnering some sympathy. I feel a twinge, mainly because I can't help thinking how much worse off we might be had Clinton's first or second AG pick been approved. Zoe Baird and Kimba Wood were both babes. If he had had a dishy AG, considering what the added element of sex does to power-madness, who knows what else they would have done together? Maybe he was planning to get a Svengalian hold on Baird or Wood and use her to help him take over the country. It's happened before: Look what the uncorrupted Queen Isabelle did after she got boompsed by the Earl of March. On second thought, don't look. Suffice to say she was thereafter called "the She-Wolf of France." Poor homely Janet Reno might be the only thing standing between us and a Castro of our own.

Every Homeric epic needs a Siren, and *Human Events* supplies one. Flat-singing Ann Coulter of the tone-deaf ears put Elián's custody up for grabs by revealing that he was conceived after his parents were divorced, meaning that Juan Miguel González has no legal claim on him, but is simply "the man who impregnated Elián's unwed mother." To keep us in belly-laughing Zeus mode, the hard-trying Coulter of the arch-fallen wit called Juan Miguel a "posterboy for Cuban family values," a "Cuban Lothario on a mission for Castro," and the "poor man's Hugh Hefner." In sum, Elián is, in Coulter's word, a "bastard."

Run that past voters, and compassionate conservatism will see its electoral hopes snatched from the rosy fingers of dawn and handed over to November's bat-wing night. **NR**

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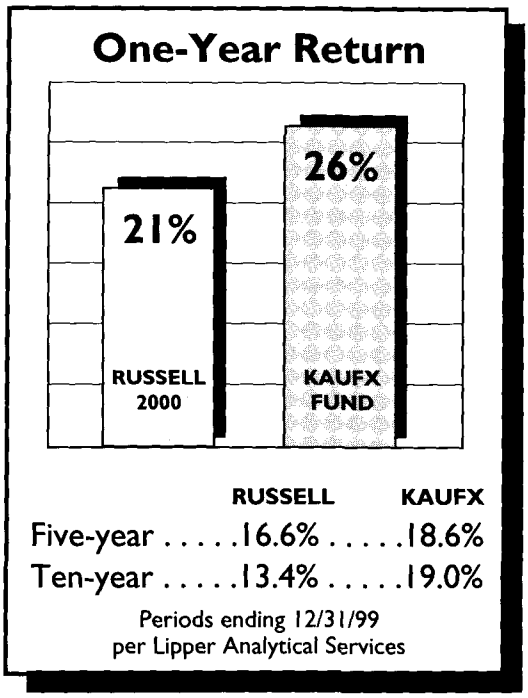
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*Risk-adjusted return among 2,768 equity funds. Mutual Funds Magazine's proprietary All-Star Ratings reflect historical risk-adjusted performance calculated as of February 8, 2000. Overall ratings are calculated from the fund's total return, relative to the volatility of its price fluctuations, over ten years.

Total returns for periods ending 12/31/99 are historical and include change in share price, reinvestment of dividends and capital gains. There is a 0.2% redemption fee and a 12b-1 fee in excess of 0.25%. The Russell 2000 Index consists of 2,000 small and mid-cap, publicly traded companies. For more complete information including charges, expenses and risks on small-cap stocks, please read the prospectus carefully before you invest. The performance cited represents past performance that is not indicative of future results. Investment performance fluctuates and fund shares when redeemed may be worth more or less than original costs. The prices of small company stocks are generally more volatile than those of large companies.

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